The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXXXVII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 1933 No. 3551

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THE NATION, No. 20 Vesey Street, New York City. Cable Address: NATION, New York. Muriel C. Gray, Advertising Manager. British Agent, Gertrude M. Cross, 23 Brunswick Square, London W. C. 1, England.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S farm-relief program is getting under way. On August 1 a federal tax of 4.2 cents a pound will be put on the processing of cotton. The proceeds, expected to reach about $210,000,000, will be turned over to those cotton growers who have been obliging enough to destroy about a fourth of their crop. Thus we are asking consumers to pay a sales tax of approximately 35 per cent on a necessary commodity in return for reduced acreage, though we are yet to learn whether or not the remaining acreage will be more intensively cultivated. This faith that prosperity can be achieved through destruction rests on the belief that what is troubling not merely cotton but other leading agricultural commodities is an excess of supply rather than any disorganization and falling away of normal demand. Normally we depend on the outside world to buy more than one-half of our cotton crop, but under the policy of "intranationalism" we are not particularly concerned about losing this market. The experiment begins under the most favorable circumstances. Since March, cotton has already approximately doubled in price even without any processing tax. It will be interesting to watch both the immediate and the longer effects of the plan. When the British adopted the Stevenson rubber restriction scheme, it seemed to be working at first in the interest of the producers. Rubber rose violently in price. But the violent rise encouraged the Dutch, who were not included in the scheme, to increase their output. The result was that the British share of the world market was left on a permanently lower level. "It seems incredible, in retrospect," writes Sir Arthur Salter, commenting on the Stevenson plan, "that any government could have employed official action to enforce a restriction scheme of which the ultimate effect was bound to be merely to profit the Dutch competitor." Let us not forget that our Southern States are not the only territory in the world where cotton can be profitably raised.

THE WORLD ECONOMIC CONFERENCE is scheduled to recess on July 27; meanwhile it becomes a more and more pathetic spectacle. The American delegation, in particular, seems bent upon making itself seem increasingly silly. Senator Pittman, the one-ideaed representative of the silver interests, seems on the verge of abandoning his campaign to compel all nations to adopt a higher silver content in their subsidiary coinage—such a move would be clearly wasteful—and may consent to accept instead a promise by these nations not to "debase" their silver coinage any further. How even insistence on this second promise can be reconciled with the American contention that what any country does with its currency is its own "domestic" policy the Senator from Nevada does not say. Meanwhile Senator Couzens, who has never indicated that he wants the war debts to us canceled — quite the contrary — rises to assert emphatically that he is against lowering our tariffs to permit our debtors to pay us in the only way they possibly could pay us. Finally, while we have been intimating strongly that we do not believe in international cooperation and that our foreign trade is unimportant anyway, we seem to be actively engaged in making trade agreements with various South American countries. The purpose of these agreements appears to be to stimulate our export trade. Do we want to begin again the folly of selling on credit? Or will we be prepared to recognize that more exports to South America will imply more imports from South America? And if we accept that consequence with South America, why not accept it with Europe? While we are making up our minds, the European countries are apparently going ahead with trade agreements which leave us out.

RAYMOND MOLEY, dean of the Washington brain trust, has returned from London looking decidedly sheepish and somewhat ridiculous. Only the President's intervention, it now appears, saved him from making an utter fool of himself. His departure from the United States was dramatic enough, but he wanted to make his arrival at the conference as spectacular as possible. It is reported that he first had the notion of going incognito to London, arriving unannounced at the conference hall. His unexpected appearance would take the delegates by storm and the conference would be saved. When Mr. Roosevelt vetoed this plan, the professor decided to fly to London from Cobh,

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where his steamer made its first stop. This scheme was likewise rejected by the President. Nevertheless, his presence in London was looked upon as a matter of great moment. He was the President's confidential advisor and had just come from Mr. Roosevelt's side. Surely he was bringing new instructions, a new formula, something of substance that would turn the tide. But within twenty-four hours it was discovered that he was as barren of ideas and suggestions as any of the American delegates, and within a week he silently departed, having accomplished precisely nothing. Why he went to the London conference in the first place is beyond understanding. With his positive "intranationalistic" views, and with the Roosevelt recovery program what it was, he could not possibly have hoped to contribute anything worth while. It is said that he carried a secret message to the American delegation, but we cannot think of anything so important that it could not as well have gone by the regular courier service of the State Department or by cable.

THE American Federation of Labor appears to be gathering in new members, or at least reenlisting many who had dropped out, under the protection of the National Industrial Recovery Act. Several new unions have been organized and affiliated with the federation. Existing unions have been expanding. For example, the United Mine Workers say that they have enrolled 300,000 coal diggers in the last two months. They have been helped, of course, by the placards they have tacked up everywhere through the coal country declaring that the government now "requires" the miners to join the U. M. W. A. While we are anxious to see a sound and substantial labor movement develop in this country, we are by no means sure that such a movement can develop under the leadership of men like William Green, Matthew Woll, and John L. Lewis. These officials seem to be much more desirous of rehabilitating themselves and their political machine than of helping the working class as a whole. Union representatives sent to Washington to take part in conferences on wages and working hours have been for the most part men utterly ignorant of labor economics. On the other hand, the industrialists and bankers have gone to Washington laden with statistics and supported by an army of economists and lawyers. In such an unequal contest the latter are bound to win every time. The union leaders may get the recognition which the recovery act appears to promise them, but what value will that have if the bankers and industrialists are to dictate the terms of the new working agreements, as they are virtually doing? Only militant and intelligent leadership can help the workers in these critical weeks.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of America has recently made public confession of its difficulties. Through the columns of the *Daily Worker* it admitted that "in spite of the radicalization of the masses of the workers, the party has not developed into a revolutionary mass party of the proletariat." This end could have been foretold. Indeed, it was predicted by many sincere friends of the Communists. But these friendly critics, most of them intellectuals, were denounced and vilified for daring to point out weaknesses. The parochialism of the party alienated many persons who otherwise would have been eager to participate in its activities. The incomprehensible jargon of the party organizers frightened away potential members. Many of the unemployed openly sympathized with the efforts of the Communists to obtain more adequate relief for them and to prevent evictions for non-payment of rent, but when the Communists began to din such phrases as "theoretical levels" and "rightist deviation" into their ears, these jobless workers, unschooled in radical ideology, shied off from further contact with the party. Again, the party has depended exclusively on Moscow not only for instructions in strategy but also for its intellectual inspiration. This has served to divorce it from the realities of American working-class life. Let the Communists come down to earth. Let them seek cooperation with other radical groups, exactly as Lenin did before 1917, at points where they can do so without sacrificing any of their essential principles. Let them talk in realistic and intelligible terms. Then perhaps they will make progress.

AN IMPORTANT naturalization case is now before the federal courts, and may reach the supreme bench, in the application of Rebecca Shelley for citizenship. Miss Shelley is a native-born American who lost her citizenship in 1922 through marriage to a German shortly before the Cable law went into effect, making it possible for an American woman to retain her citizenship in spite of marriage to an alien. In Miss Shelley's case there was no remedy except to go through the regular naturalization process, but she was unwilling to take an oath to bear arms in defense of the country in time of war. In consequence, she failed in two attempts to get citizenship from the courts of Michigan. Her third application—in which she has the backing of a special committee of distinguished Americans and half a dozen pacifist organizations—is now before the federal court in Detroit. The committee behind Miss Shelley contends that her case is not governed by the Bland and McIntosh decisions of the United States Supreme Court. She has taken pains to say that she is ready to take the citizen's oath without mental reservations but that she interprets the word "defense" as not demanding military action.

MAHATMA GANDHI refused to call off the civil disobedience campaign despite the persistent prophecies of the Indian correspondents who continued to report that he favored an end of the movement until the very moment when he reiterated his constant position, namely, that the campaign should go on until an "honorable settlement" is reached. Why the correspondents should have been so sure that he was about to shift his position completely is a mystery. His reasons for supporting the campaign still exist. The brutal ordinances, which no Englishman would tolerate at home, are still the law of India; under their provisions thousands upon thousands of Indians have been thrown into jail where most of them are classified as Class C prisoners and therefore treated as common criminals. A short quotation from the Indian Emergency Powers Ordinance is sufficient to make it clear that civil rights are non-existent in India:

> Any officer of government authorized in this behalf by general or special order of the local government may, if satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that any person has acted, is acting, or is about to act, in a manner prejudicial to public safety or peace, arrest such person without warrant, and may, in so doing, use any means that may be necessary.

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As for the impending constitution of India, it has lost none of its safeguards since Gandhi and the Congress Party rejected the results of the round-table conference on whose findings it is based. And it is not likely that an India bill backed by Stanley Baldwin and the Conservative Party will leave out a single one of the provisions by which the viceroy would be empowered at any moment he saw fit to take control of "self-governing" India at any point in its governmental structure. Viceroy Willingdon has refused Gandhi's request for a conference at which he wished to discuss the terms on which the disobedience campaign would be called off, and Gandhi is ready to go back to jail. At this writing, an "honorable settlement" which would provide real self-government and civil liberty for India seems far in the future. Unless, by some miracle, Great Britain turns to the left, Indian independence, like political and economic world peace, appears to lie on the other side of that vast struggle for power, national and international, which grows daily more imminent and which the intelligence of the world is apparently powerless to avoid.

A PECULIARLY DESPICABLE sort of revenge is that adopted by the Nazis against the relatives of Philipp Scheidemann, formerly Chancellor of the German Republic, because of an unfriendly article published in the United States. As Scheidemann himself is out of reach, five of his relatives in Germany have been imprisoned, an action which indicates a return to a policy previously invoked against the Jews but discontinued because of wide protest. Other similar arrests are reported, the victims including the wife of Deputy Ludwig of the Palatinate Diet and Frau Kunze, wife of the secretary of the Social Democratic Party in Dresden, the husbands of both these women having fled from Germany and refused to return. This policy of seizing hostages goes hand in hand with two recent decrees. One provides for seizure of the property and withdrawal of the citizenship of critics of the government living abroad. Under this provision Germans abroad can speak against Hitlerism only at the risk of losing any possessions they may have in the Reich and of bringing reprisals upon relatives at home. The second decree, aimed mainly against recent Jewish immigrants, makes possible the revocation of citizenship granted since the World War. Tactics similar to these of the Nazis have been employed by Mussolini, but otherwise they are almost unknown in civilized countries except as part of the code of gangsters.

HERR HITLER shows his genius in nothing more clearly than in the mastery of the details imposed upon him as the result of that rapidly advancing consolidation which seems destined soon to make him the only man in Germany allowed to have an opinion on any subject. Only a few weeks ago he issued an order forbidding butchers to make sausages in the shape of the swastika—doubtless because he feared that it might lead some to conclude that the symbol is only a lot of boloney. Rapidly recovering from the drain upon his energy incident to making such a decision, he has now issued another decree forbidding parents to name their new-born either Hitler or (in case the infant happens to be female) Hitlerine. It has remained, however, for one of his subordinates to achieve what is, so far, the best example of Nazi wit. According to the Associated Press, this subordinate has just announced that henceforth the imperial eagle will be shown grasping a sword "as a symbol of peace."

IT IS REPORTED that Professor Irving Babbitt had no great respect for many of those who climbed aboard his Humanist bandwagon when, for some mysterious reason, it got started about three years ago. Now that he has just died in Cambridge at the age of sixty-seven he leaves Paul Elmer More as the last remaining representative of the older generation of those quasi-Christian American scholars who carried on a losing battle against both romanticism and that naturalism which they regarded as essentially a later development of the same thing. Professor Babbitt, author of many books and for thirty-eight years a member of the faculty of Harvard University, had a prodigious familiarity with international literature, which he seemed sometimes to read chiefly in order to denounce it. By comparison with Professor More his whole attitude and work seemed relatively negative. It was a strange paradox that this aloof professor should have been accepted as the leader in a short-lived controversy of more or less popular character. The explanation of the paradox is that there was a certain connection between his ideas and those of a reactionary group of younger critics. It is doubtful, however, if the older and the younger Humanists ever understood one another, and Professor Babbitt allowed himself to be quoted as an authority without, except upon one occasion, taking an active part in the controversy, which was already dying when the more recent aggressiveness of the Marxian critics pushed it into the background.

AT a luncheon given by the Royal Society of Literature Rudyard Kipling told his hearers that "writers cannot lie." We do not know exactly what he meant, but it does not matter. We have daily and irrefutable evidence that liars can write.

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH, we are informed in a press dispatch which fairly breathes amazed admiration, attended a formal banquet the other evening "attired in white linen trousers with soft collar and shirt" and made a speech in which he congratulated himself for daring to be comfortable. It is a great moment in the history of the world when those who own it have the courage to do as they please even in such minor matters as cool pants. We can hardly wait for the news that the Prince of Wales has sat down at a troops review or that J. P. Morgan has punched a Senate investigator in the nose. Until then we must bear as well as we can the tribulations of the theoretically all-powerful, of which a particularly painful example is now on view at Albany, New York. Kidnappers, as everybodys knows, dared to make off with the legal and political heir of the O'Connells, the bosses of Albany who perform the same functions for that lucky city that the sachems of Tammany perform for New York. At this writing, the O'Connells have absolutely refused to allow the duly authorized enforcers of the law in Albany to come near the case—have not thrown to them a single paltry clue to be baffled by. Apparently, in the course of their long and complete control of Albany, the O'Connells have reduced the law and its officials to such depths of inefficiency that they know better than to expect help from that quarter. Our sympathy for them in this their hour of need is prodigious.

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Civil Service—or Pretense?

WE should like to hail President Roosevelt's order of July 12 in regard to postmasterships as a praiseworthy extension of the civil service and a step away from the spoils system in public office. At first glance the order had some such appearance. Unfortunately, examination of the details compels the disappointing conclusion that the order is only a political flourish and fails to advance the progress of a non-partisan government personnel in any substantial way.

Not only is Mr. Roosevelt's immediate order to Postmaster General Farley of slight consequence, but his direction to the latter to prepare legislation for action by Congress next winter promises hardly better. Practically all advances made so far toward the merit system in government service have been accomplished directly by executive action. Congress generally has been an obstructive agency, more intent upon preserving party patronage than having efficient federal departments. If President Roosevelt sincerely wants to take our post offices out of politics—instead of merely making political capital by a gesture in that direction—he can do it without any reference to or bother with Congress. He has the appointing power, and all he needs to do is to issue an executive order limiting his own action—just as other Presidents before him have done.

Exactly what does the new order propose? According to the most recent data, there are 1,122 postmasterships of the first class, 3,425 of the second, 10,485 of the third, and 32,672 of the fourth—47,704 in all. The fourth-class postmasterships are already in the civil service. The other three groups are not, but in regard to third-class postmasters it has been the custom for the Civil Service Commission to conduct a written examination of the applicants and send the names of the three with the highest rating to the Postmaster General. The latter has then submitted the names to the local Congressman or political committees, and the choice thus arrived at has been recommended to the President for appointment.

So far as first- and second-class postmasters go, the custom has been for the Civil Service Commission and the Post Office Department to send an agent to the town where the vacancy exists to make a personal inquiry and report. The new Roosevelt order will change this so as to apply the same procedure to first- and second-class postmasterships as to third. Mr. Farley says that the Civil Service Commission will require applicants to fill out "complete questionnaires under oath." Even granting that this technique is effectively carried out, it will hardly do more than save something in expenses. It may also eliminate sheer dunces, but our post offices have suffered less from them than from party henchmen who have used their offices for political purposes. First-, second-, and third-class postmasters have the disposition of considerable patronage—nearly 60,000 appointments in all.

It may be asked why the certification of the three names highest in the rating of the Civil Service Commission is not a satisfactory method for the appointment of postmasters, since that is the way used with fair success in filling other positions in the federal departments and in general is the civil-service technique in use by American States and municipalities. The National Civil Service Reform League replies that although the certification of three names works tolerably well elsewhere, the postal system has been so notoriously exploited for years for political purposes that it seems impossible to eliminate politics from it except by more drastic means. Moreover, a reading of Mr. Roosevelt's order requiring a certification of three names from the Civil Service Commission discloses a proviso "that the Postmaster General may reject the name or names of any persons so certified if he shall find that such person or persons are disqualified." The leeway that this proviso allows is obvious. No wonder Mr. Farley is pleased with the new method!

The way to handle the situation in the public interest is to return to the method introduced by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. The former ordered the Postmaster General to choose the *first person* on the eligible list in appointing rural carriers and fourth-class postmasters. President Wilson extended the plan to apply also to postmasters of the first, second, and third classes. Unfortunately, this procedure was not allowed to stand by President Harding, who preferred the certification of three names with a possibility of choice among them.

If, as we said earlier, the President sincerely wants to take the postal service out of politics, he can do it all by himself through a simple executive order, just as Woodrow Wilson did, reestablishing the technique set up by the latter. This, the President was specifically asked to do by the National Civil Service Reform League in a letter sent to him on April 22, last. In its letter the league strongly condemned the present method of appointing postmasters and concluded: "We are convinced that it would be better to have the postmasterships openly and flagrantly spoils appointments, exposed in all their hideous nakedness as they used to be, than to have them continue nominally and hypocritically ascribed to the competitive merit system and to the alleged misconduct of the Civil Service Commission."

In our last issue we commented upon the grave danger that the Roosevelt program would be overwhelmed by patronage scandals which would destroy the faith of the public both in the competence and the honesty of the Administration's effort. The attack on the federal civil service so far is twofold, first, through the abolition of thousands of positions in the previously existing classified personnel, and, second, by the creation of numbers of jobs, all outside of the civil service, in the new emergency organizations. The exemption of places in the emergency services from civil-service requirements has been defended by some on the ground of the need of haste, but the National Civil Service Reform League said in its recent annual report: "Adherence to the merit system would not in the least delay the organization of the new bureaus. Indeed, existing eligible registers of the Civil Service Commission, if used, would greatly facilitate the employment program for the government."

There is still time for President Roosevelt to come out in the public interest both in regard to appointments to the new emergency services and to the postal system.

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The Steel Code

AT last the code of the steel industry has been submitted to the Recovery Administration and the issue of union organization has emerged frankly into the foreground. Most of the codes previously submitted have tiptoed around this issue as if it were a high explosive, as indeed it is. They have included in their provisions the section of the Industrial Recovery Act relating to labor ("that employees shall have the right to organize and to bargain collectively . . ." and "that no employee . . . shall be required as a condition of employment to join any company union or to refrain from joining, organizing, or assisting a labor organization of his own choosing") and have doubtless hoped that they might thus avoid more explicit agreements. Only the women's cloak and suit industry, the sixth to submit a definitive code, included a clear-cut commitment to collective bargaining with existing independent unions in the industry.

The steel code, long awaited, is of profound significance. Steel is the heart of American industry and the men in control of steel are also those who wield the greatest financial power in the country. Attempts at labor organization have time and again dashed themselves to bloody bits on the threshold of the United States Steel Corporation. Wages have been held down and hours held up by the same firm hands that have fixed prices and controlled output.

Undoubtedly the authors of the code have accomplished a feat of dexterity, if nothing else. They have drawn up an agreement regulating hours and wages and establishing standards of industrial conduct which is designed to satisfy the members of the industry while fulfilling the basic demands of the government. The one element which has not been accorded equal consideration is labor. Not that labor is left out of account. Far from it. The steel code not only establishes maximum hours per week and minimum wages (the former set at 40; the latter ranging from $10 to $16) but duly quotes the statutory provisions guaranteeing collective bargaining and the employee's right to join the organization "of his own choosing" and to remain out of company unions. But the code then proceeds directly, with no apparent conviction of inconsistency, to expound the virtues of the employee representation plans "which are now in force at plants of members of the industry generally." These are the solemn words in which it declares its faith:

> It is the belief of the industry that the method of collective bargaining set forth in such plans provides for a day-to-day adjustment of all matters relating to the employment of employees in the industry and at the same time insures to such employees a knowledge and understanding of the conditions of the business of their employer which they would otherwise be unable to obtain; that such principles should be maintained; and that the rights of the employees and members of the industry to bargain through representatives elected or appointed and acting in accordance with such plans without interference, restraint, or coercion of any sort should be preserved and protected.

The authors of those ponderous phrases will perhaps be grateful if we translate them into simpler words and clearer meanings. The steel industry believes that company unions comprise a useful department of the industry. They can be made to understand their employers' needs, whereas an independent union would certainly be less interested in those needs than in the needs of the workers. Therefore no outside labor agitators, or even the law itself, should interrupt the pleasant intercourse between the steel-company unions and their bosses. In fact, the Administration should itself protect them from such interruption. What the steel companies want, in short, is to obtain government support and legal backing in their long-drawn-out, bitter, and successful fight to prevent the independent organization of their workers.

The labor provisions of the steel code will be eagerly seized upon by other employers. Already a ludicrous race is on in many industries to slap together company unions and present them to the Recovery Administration as accomplished facts before the regular labor organizations have had time to get in and form independent unions. Organized labor, meanwhile, has been galvanized into action. The A. F. of L. headquarters in Washington is swamped with requests from every industry and every section of the country for charters and for organizers and help. Despite a lack of systematic effort, unionization is spreading like a forest fire. The battle is on and if the federal Administration hopes to remain above it, it is going to be speedily disillusioned. If it bans the labor clauses of the steel code it will win the confidence of the great body of workers, organized and unorganized, and will present the best possible evidence that its real interest is the welfare of the millions whose economic roots have been torn up in the collapse of industry. But at the same time it will face the hostility of big business headed by the Steel Corporation and the house of Morgan. Which will Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Johnson choose?

Meeting the Nazi Threat

THE Nazi assault on reason is a challenge to the whole world. It constitutes a repudiation of all the essential values which the human race has painfully established in its slow rise from the Dark Ages. Particularly does it challenge every basic American principle—the aspirations enshrined in our bill of rights, freedom of speech, of conscience, of press, the equality of all men before the law regardless of race or religion. As the enormity of the Nazi crime and its menace to mankind are established, ways to meet this peril become the subject of study and thought. The boycott is an effective weapon. But while usefully destructive, it does not meet the need for positive action.

Fortunately a constructive opportunity is provided. Alvin Johnson, director of the New School for Social Research in New York City, has formulated a plan to bring to this country the outstanding scholars of Germany, victims of Nazi obscurantism, and to establish them here in an autonomous "University in Exile." American universities are themselves in financial distress. The majority have been forced to retrench radically, to cut salaries, to drop some of their teaching staff. For them to make a place for even the most eminent academicians from abroad, except in a few special cases, and to sacrifice American teachers who have a prior claim, would be unjust and unpopular. Dr. Johnson purposes establishing in New York an entirely new academic unit, with funds specially subscribed. Beginning modestly,

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the proposal is to engage fifteen German scholars in the social sciences at $4,000 a year, and to guarantee their employment for two years. The sum required for this initial program, $120,000, has already been subscribed, and this fall the "University in Exile" will be inaugurated, with a faculty of international repute. The class-room facilities of the New School for Social Research will be turned over to them. They will be free to continue the work interrupted by the *furor hitlerica* and to lecture to all who desire to listen.

The number of scholars ousted from German universities is under 400. They have been dismissed, or have resigned, partly on racial grounds, but more especially because they are scientists, searchers after truth, who could not possibly teach the grotesque falsehoods implicit in Nazi economics, Nazi history, Nazi sociology, Nazi philosophy, Nazi biology, Nazi anthropology, and Nazi ethics. Some of these professors have already been engaged by universities in London, Madrid, Paris, Prague, and Zurich. Those available would probably not exceed 300, a negligible figure numerically when viewed in terms of absorbing them into our cultural life. But what would it not mean to the United States to secure for coming generations some of the best of German scholarship? Even more than from the forty-eighters who, fleeing from monarchist tyranny eighty-five years ago, brought so much of value to American public life, the potential contribution of these ousted German scholars would be incalculable. But apart from any selfish motivation, apart from the essentially valid and human objective of offering the finest kind of relief to fellow beings in deep distress, is the even greater opportunity for America in this day and age to reassert its faith in its own heritage. For surely it must be apparent that liberty, that almost forgotten ideal so long cherished by Americans, is under assault as never before.

The struggle for human freedom takes on different aspects in different ages, but civilization is today driven back to defend terrain supposedly conquered by our forebears once and for all time. The issue cannot be avoided. Atavistic barbarism will engulf peoples which are supine and indifferent, as it engulfed the German republicans, Social Democrats, and intellectuals. We in America must face and meet this challenge head on and level-eyed. Here then is the opportunity. It is infinitely better that the endowment for a greater "University in Exile" be met by the small contributions of hundreds of thousands of Americans than by the endowments, welcome though they be, of a few wealthy and public-spirited individuals. The nucleus of the "University in Exile" is already an established fact. The cost of extending it to include 300 German scholars—to take in faculties in the natural sciences and in arts and letters—would be $1,200,000 a year, and that cost would diminish in successive years as the classes tended to become self-sustaining. The entire expense of such a university for a generation would be less than the price of one battleship. Here is a chance for those who wish tangibly to help the victims of the Nazi outrages and to contribute their mite to a reaffirmation of all that should be most dear to Americans.

The sponsors of the "University in Exile," asked by Dr. Johnson to serve, are Wilbur L. Cross, John Dewey, Felix Frankfurter, Ernest Gruening, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Robert M. Hutchins, Robert M. MacIver, George A. Plimpton, Edwin R. A. Seligman, and Herbert Bayard Swope.

Thespis on Vacation

A DRAWING in a recent issue of the *New Yorker* showed two city slickers interviewing a rustic realtor. Underneath was a legend which ran: "Have you got a medium-sized barn? Something with a seating capacity of about two hundred." More serious evidence of the spread of the summer theater is given in a special issue of the *Stage* which lists seventy theaters in the East alone and expresses the opinion that before the season is over at least twenty-five more will have made their bid for an audience. One tends to forget that there was a time when the Provincetown Playhouse was actually at Provincetown, but it is only during the last two or three years that the summer-theater movement has reached such proportions as to call for its consideration as a major phenomenon.

The true summer theater is not to be confused with the local stock company. The manager is generally someone who is or would like to be connected with the metropolitan stage, and he is merely passing what used to be his vacation in the neighborhood of a summer colony. The company may possibly contain some amateurs, but at the more ambitious theaters it is more likely to be composed of professionals glad to find summer work away from the city, and a "visiting star" is likely to be invited for each new production. Some of the plays are revivals of Broadway successes, but many are try-outs of new pieces with aspirations toward Broadway which Broadway managers come to see. The audience contains many vacationists, but there is often also a generous sprinkling of natives who are learning that the movies are not the only form of dramatic entertainment which survives in the United States.

Enthusiasts see in the situation the beginning of the theatrical millennium. Playwrights and actors who—like the wicked lord in "The Happy Hypocrite"—have not seen a primrose in years now stumble over honeysuckle (or poison ivy) on their way to the stage door and find wisps of more or less new-mown hay in their dressing rooms. Moreover, there are other less purely spiritual gains. Play production is relatively cheap in what has come to be known as a "horse and cow theater." Relatively free experimentation is therefore possible and scripts which no Broadway manager would take a chance on have an opportunity to demonstrate their possibilities. One may also whisper the fact that a good many capable performers are very glad at the end of a starvation winter to get at least board and lodging in some pleasant vacation resort.

One need not be a torch bearer to see the spread of the summer theater as at least a healthy and gratifying phenomenon which has some of the advantages without all the drawbacks of the more orthodox little theater of the winter season in provincial towns. Not all the seventy-odd playhouses listed by the *Stage* will justify their existence. They range all the way from such thoroughly professional institutions as Lawrence Langner's Country Playhouse at Westport, Connecticut, to others completely amateur in the worst or the best sense of the term. But they are carrying the theater to regions remote from Broadway. Quite possibly they will play an important part in that long-delayed rebirth of "the road" for which everybody has been longing.

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Issues and Men

The Roosevelt Revolution

IN the three months which have elapsed since this page was discontinued because of the writer's departure for England, momentous things have happened on both sides of the ocean. Whoever is responsible, whatever the cause, the whole scene has changed marvelously for the better on this side of the Atlantic: on the other, everything is overshadowed by the economic chaos and the triumph of despotic barbarism in Germany, which for the first time makes it truly a country to be feared and to be watched with eagle eyes lest Hitler precipitate the final ruin of Europe.

But *here!* How can one express the amazement one feels at the revolution which has taken place in so short a time? It has seemed to me as if all my fellow craftsmen, not excluding the editors of *The Nation,* have been so close to the bewildering, kaleidoscopic happenings as perhaps not to have been able to see the whole of the forest for the trees. Certainly that would be entirely pardonable. Never in the history of the American press have editors been called upon to pass as many or more momentous judgments as they have since March 4 last.

Measures of the utmost importance have been introduced, reported, and jammed through Congress with such speed that they have become the law of the land before editors of weeklies had time to comment upon them. The most involved and delicate questions and proposals have come up for comment overnight, usually heralded by days of utterly contradictory forecasts as to what the President would or would not do. The President has rushed in where angels might well have feared to tread—only to be acclaimed because he was doing something and the mass of the people were too frightened and harassed to care whether it was for better or for worse.

At the English end of the cable it was almost impossible to follow Mr. Roosevelt's course intelligently. The brief, cabled summaries were chiefly bewildering especially because the English press does not report American happenings with anything like the detail with which English events in every field of activity are reported in our papers. Often I have sighed with relief to think that I was no longer the responsible editor of *The Nation* called upon to decide policies and pass upon concrete proposals utterly beyond my limited financial and economic vision. And always I have thought with deepest sympathy of my associates, the editors of *The Nation,* and marveled that they did their difficult job as well as they did.

Yet I confess that sometimes I have wished for a greater note of jubilation, and for a more general view of what has happened. Not that I believe in everything that Mr. Roosevelt has done. His recent treatment of the World Economic Conference seems to me to have been disgraceful in manner, to have discredited utterly our delegation and our country abroad. If the President was justified in suddenly reversing his stand on stabilization and kicking the Conference in the abdomen, why did he ever send the delegation and Moley over there? As for the announcement of the Secretary of the Navy, with Mr. Roosevelt's approval, that we are arranging to build our fleet up to treaty limits, and our establishment of a new — and somewhat aggressive — naval policy, all I can say about that is that it is worthy of Adolf Hitler. At this stage of our own and the world's history such an action is criminal folly, indefensible from any point of view. Yet a demand for naval expansion was precisely to have been expected from Franklin Roosevelt, whose big-navy proclivities he long ago sincerely and openly avowed—which is one reason why I could not vote for him for President. Yet despite these things and many others, despite the menace of dictatorship to be discovered in so many places in these new laws, I still find much in the American scene today to be thankful for and in spots to marvel at.

Who, for example, could read of the voluntary (?) action of the textile leaders in abolishing child labor without bursting into cheers? Think of those years of hopeless struggle to abolish child labor by law and then to amend the Constitution only to find it impossible to get more than four or five States to vote for the amendment. And now suddenly to achieve our long-cherished vision by the simple device of a minimum wage which at once made child labor financially unprofitable! I do not know who thought of that, or if it came about by accident. But I do know that it has removed one of the deepest and darkest stains from the American flag. And then when I read of those trade codes that industry is being bludgeoned into and find such persons as Frances Perkins, Harold Ickes, Donald Richberg, Joseph Eastman, and John Collier in dominating positions, with Harold Ickes in charge of the whole program of public works, I want to go down on my knees and salaam respectfully three times to the East.

No, we are not out of the woods and no man knows what still lies before us. But the great thing is that a *mental* revolution has taken place with a speed which defies belief. To come back to America and hear no more of Hoover, no more of rugged individualism, no more complaints that the government is delving too far into private business, except in the columns of a few papers like the New York *Herald Tribune* and the Chicago *Tribune,* and those comparatively mild; to find the American business man actually thinking about new methods and a square deal, about being decent to the people in his industry and his competitors; to find the taint taken off socialism to a considerable degree and the recognition of Russia at hand, for these things let us bless our stars. No one can yet tell us how far this mental jolt may not lead us, or how much we shall yet get out of it, but the great and wonderful fact remains that, whether they know it or not, their world has dropped out from under the Babbitts, our great capitalist rulers.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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"Business Is Picking Up" — *Drawing by William Gropper*

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Eating Without Working

A Moral Disquisition

By STUART CHASE

"IN the last resort," said Thorstein Veblen, "the economic moralities wait on the economic necessities." No single one of the economic moralities is held in more tender regard among Western peoples than that carried in the phrase: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread." To secure useful goods, one must give useful labor. This is, to date, axiomatic. Useful labor, moreover, has taken on a moral dignity, almost a divinity, which would have shocked Plato or Pericles, who held common labor to be menial and degrading.

It is true that the modern rule has one important exception. It is not applicable to that 2 per cent or so of the population which Veblen has characterized as the kept classes. Those who live by virtue of the absentee ownership of profitable investment, whether in lands, buildings, royalties, or stocks and bonds, are totally exempt from its compulsions. It is manifest that in so far as they live on the usufruct of their portfolios they eat without working. Fortunately the classical economists have been at some pains to rationalize this breach of a great moral principle. It appears that the kept classes consume without producing *now,* because *in the past* they have produced without consuming. They are justly entitled to a "reward for abstinence." This would be news to many young gentlemen and ladies in exclusive finishing schools; it would be news to every fortunate gambler in real estate and stocks; news to all the recipients of engraved certificates of esteem from the house of Morgan; it would be news to Mr. Charlie Mitchell and the million-dollar bonus boys—corporate, not khaki—but so the classic apologia goes. And certainly no group in the community is more alert to the moral virtue of diligence, application, and industry, on the part of others, than the kept classes. "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." Even child labor is defended on the grounds that it keeps children out of mischief. Indeed a perspicacious psychologist might amuse himself with the theory that lack of useful work in a given group is compensated by their profound regard for the necessity of useful work at other points in the social structure.

The economic morality of work stands, then, for 98 per cent, more or less, of the population, charmingly and persuasively encouraged by the remaining 2 per cent. Impinging upon this principle, however, comes a thoroughly unmoral economic reality. Its pressure is already immense, and day by day grows stronger. Raw natural energy, harnessed in a prime mover and yoked to an operating machine, is destroying human work. The curve of technical invention is cumulative and tends to grow, according to Dr. William F. Ogburn, at a geometrical rate. It is perhaps the strongest economic force in the modern world; nor can it be stopped short of scrapping what is known as Western civilization, and retreating to the handicraft of the Middle Ages.

The economic reality of the automatic process and quantity production has a steadily declining use for human labor, particularly manual labor. What it does demand is efficient consumption of its fabulous output. Unless its serialized machines and processes are run at approximate capacity on the "balanced load" principle, it cannot properly function—as in the present depression. It demands efficient functioning at the cost of wrecking the whole economic structure. To function it must have millions and millions of the sturdiest sort of consumers; consumers with admirable digestive tracts and great powers for depreciating personal equipment. Slowly, under this imperative, consumption is becoming, as a matter of economic reality, more important than work; purchasing power more important than man hours.

Slowly, reluctantly, even kicking and screaming, industrial nations are being driven to the hitherto abhorrent notion that the consumer must be furnished with purchasing power whether he works or not. Two years ago in this republic the word "dole" carried rather more opprobrium than the word "racketeer." Yet the dole marches on, five hundred millions of it in the last Congress.

It is touching to watch the tortures of the moralists caught on the horns of this dilemma; one school of them seriously proposes that the output, rather than be allowed to fall into the hands of the consumer, should be destroyed. A billion pounds of coffee, millions of bushels of wheat, thousands of bales of cotton, uncounted gallons of milk have recently been subjected to holocaust and destruction, thus preserving the economic morality of the wayfaring citizen. He has not worked, so he must be prevented from consuming. This censorship, however, like another recent noble experiment in prohibiting consumption, has not served economic realities, however much it may have served the cause of beautiful morals. The jam in the industrial mechanism is not relieved by even such monumental measures of deliberate waste.

The consumer must be permitted to consume. There is no other final outcome to the pressure of the technical arts. The 98 per cent must absorb, with or without working, even as the 2 per cent have done hitherto. That this will reduce the relative advantages of conspicuous consumption on the part of the 2 per cent is regrettable, perhaps, but inevitable.

A few business men and a few college professors saw the handwriting on the wall as early as 1922. Mr. Henry Ford saw it even earlier. They began the now familiar talk about the "economy of high wages," furnishing the worker with power to buy back what, with his declining assistance, the machine process could make. This movement never progressed much beyond talk, but it was the thin entering wedge.

From a broader point of view, of course, the consumer is not without moral claims of his own. The output of modern industry rests on five fundamental factors: (1) Natural resources available; (2) skilled and unskilled labor (a declining factor but still very important); (3) technical management (an increasingly important factor); (4) non-human forms of energy (from coal, oil, water power); (5) the cultural heritage of the technical arts.

If the consumer can find a job to aid production in fac-

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tor 2, well and good; that gives him a direct if modest claim on the output, as has long been recognized. But increasingly he will be denied a job as technological unemployment gains. Either that, or the work demanded of him will be startlingly reduced by a shorter working week. In either case, toil will decline, and with it those claims founded on useful work.

Technical management has a sound and growing claim on the output; but as there are probably not more than 200,000 families headed by active technicians in the United States, this is far too small a group to be of any appreciable help in carrying off the product. There are 30,000,000 families in the country.

The other three factors—natural resources, energy, and the technical arts—are, or should be, the common inheritance of the whole community, which is the same as saying the common inheritance of the consumer. His common property provides the factors which are most important in the whole productive mechanism. He has, accordingly, from this broader point of view, a reasonably good moral right to the usufruct of his property. Now this may or may not be good moral doctrine; certainly economic realities are on the road to making it a practicable doctrine. To establish the right of the consumer to consume will take time—it may, indeed, take a revolution or two. But if I read the march of history aright, it will not be gainsaid.

While history will undoubtedly solve this problem in her own brusque and hidden ways, it may not be out of place to speculate upon the methods which she may conceivably pursue. In the serried vanguard of the opposition which now blocks the free flow of consumption stand the private banking system and the debt structure. It is probable that both must be liquidated to a percentum of their present grandeur, a percentum which it would be rash to estimate, save for the reservation that it will be extremely small.

The creation of money, the allotment of purchasing power, is a social function of the first importance and should be restored to the federal government, in whose hands the Constitution placed it. It is forever impossible for the private banker, working for private gain, adequately to finance the consumer. It wounds his moral sensibilities, for one thing. By reducing his time-honored toll and that of his stockholders, it would condemn itself to him as "unsound." If recent history does not demonstrate the incompatibility of private banking and effective consumption, mathematics can prove it readily. The consumer, therefore, cannot adequately consume until the private banker, as the chief executor of the nation's credit, is lifted gently but firmly out of the picture. It is unfortunate that Mr. Roosevelt did not seize the unparalleled opportunity to lift him out, to the applause of a grateful nation, on March 4 last.

The liquidation of the debt structure promises to be an even more drastic and shocking business. History may handle this problem by inflation, by devaluation of the dollar, by deliberate scaling down, by a hit or miss tumbling down, after the fashion of the walls of Jericho. It is to be noted, however, that the walls of Jericho were solid stone and mortar, not notes and paper.

As for the methods whereby the consumer will ultimately be financed, history has a wide choice. She may select minimum subsistence payments per capita or per family; she may choose consumers' dividends, or a straight rationing of prime necessities, or an enormously shortened work week with undiminished wages—thus keeping all able-bodied consumers nominally employed; or a guaranteed job, more or less of a nominal character, in the public-works division; or a combination of these methods.

Somehow, somewhere—but in the not too distant future—mass consumption must move up to the technical requirements of mass production, at the cost of whatever moralities and financial dream castles lie in the way. No realist will even consider retreating to the economy of the Middle Ages. Yet this retreat, painful and disorderly as it would be, is the sole alternative to deliberate and purposeful mass consumption. All men cannot at present work. All men must eat.

Can Currencies Be Managed?

By HENRY HAZLITT

WHEN President Roosevelt, on July 3, rejected the efforts of the World Economic Conference to achieve a "temporary stabilization" of currencies, he was not merely rejecting the proposal to stabilize the leading currencies in terms of each other for the next few months; he was also hinting at a fundamental change in monetary policy.

> The sound internal economic system of a nation [he said] is a greater factor in its well-being than the price of its currency in changing terms of the currencies of other nations. . . .
>
> So, too, old fetishes of so-called international bankers are being replaced by efforts to plan national currencies with the objective of giving to those currencies a continuing purchasing power which does not greatly vary in terms of the commodities and needs of modern civilization.
>
> Let me be frank in saying that the United States seeks the kind of dollar which a generation hence will have the same purchasing power and debt-paying power as the dollar value we hope to attain in the near future.

It is obvious that the President—either through a direct reading of Maynard Keynes, or of some such popularizer of Keynes as Stuart Chase, or through the advice of some member of his "brain trust"—has been greatly influenced by the advocates of a so-called "managed" currency. How successful would such a currency be? Perhaps the best way to approach this problem is to consider the leading proposals so far offered and such experience of "managed" currencies as we happen to have.

Proposals to abolish the gold or any other metallic standard in favor of some other system of currency have been made from time immemorial. To the men in power immediately after the French Revolution, to our own statesmen immediately after the Civil War, who held that the irredeemable paper currency then in circulation "rests on the

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property of the whole country, and has for its security the faith and patriotism of the greatest and freest country on the face of the globe," to our Populists in 1892, and to the hordes of currency cranks always and everywhere, gold reserves and gold convertibility have seemed not merely unnecessary, but positively ominous—"a vast conspiracy," as the Populist platform put it, "against mankind." But a sharp distinction must be drawn between those simple-minded persons who believe that wealth can somehow be created by the printing press, or those who from time to time have favored inflation as a means of paying off debts for a few cents on the dollar, and those serious reformers who have felt that it is possible to devise a currency that would be more effective than those based on the orthodox gold standard in keeping the prices of commodities stable.

The two most intelligent proposals of this nature are those of Irving Fisher and of John Maynard Keynes. The Fisher plan was first in the field, and Mr. Keynes's proposals are in the main a modification of it. Professor Fisher has long been recognized as the leading adherent in America of what is known as the quantity theory of money. He believes, in other words, that the price level of commodities varies in direct proportion to the volume of money in circulation (including bank deposits and allowing for changes in the "velocity of circulation.") Curiously enough, however, his famous plan for a "compensated" dollar rests essentially on the radically different "bullionist" theory. This theory holds that under the orthodox gold standard a price, at bottom, expresses the relationship between the value of a given amount of the commodity priced, and the value of a fixed weight of gold. Professor Fisher's proposal, therefore, is that instead of retaining a gold dollar of a fixed weight and fineness (until March of this year this was 23.2 grains) we change the weight of the dollar constantly in exact ratio with changes in the general level of prices. In more detail, Professor Fisher's plan is this: He would make use of one of the existing "index numbers" or create a new one especially for this purpose. An index number is based on an average of the prices of a large number of different commodities, sometimes including several hundred. Suppose we should decide now, for example, to return to the price level of 1924-1925 (as recently suggested by the President) and to stabilize there. We should then assign to the 1924-25 price level the arbitrary value of 100. If we should discover that present prices (after allowing for the rise that has been caused by the recent depreciation of the dollar) were 40 per cent below that level, we should then cut the gold content of the dollar by 40 per cent—returning, of course, to gold convertibility. Thereafter, we should change the gold content of the dollar each month by the same percentage as the price average had changed—or rather, as suggested by Professor Fisher, we should change it by a maximum of 1 per cent a month in either direction. As, prior to the World War, changes in the general price level almost never were as great as 12 per cent in any one year, Professor Fisher thinks this change would be sufficient to keep prices from fluctuating.

How would this plan be likely to work? Let us pass over, for the moment, the question of immediate devaluation, and consider the proposal for keeping prices stable thereafter. The first result to be noted is that, if the plan were put into operation by any one country acting alone, while other countries returned to an orthodox free-gold basis, the exchange rate of the country on the "compensated" currency basis would be subject to monthly fluctuations in terms of the rest. This would put a serious obstacle in the way of a free flow of foreign trade, and would be particularly injurious to the foreign trade of the nation on the "compensated" basis. An even more serious defect of the plan—still assuming that it were adopted, say, by the United States acting alone—is that both American and foreign speculators could trade constantly against the government with impunity. Suppose, for example, that during any month commodity prices were falling. It would be relatively simple for speculators to calculate before the end of the month whether or not the decline had exceeded 1 per cent. Moreover, if the decline had exceeded 2 per cent in the preceding month, speculators would know that the dollar was due for another reduction of 1 per cent in its gold content whether or not commodity prices were falling during the current month. They would therefore redeem their paper dollars in gold, knowing that after the turn of the month they could turn the gold in again for more paper dollars. Conversely, if prices had been rising during the month, speculators would turn in gold for paper dollars, and after the end of the month they could turn in the paper dollars and draw out a larger amount of gold than they had turned in.

It is obvious not only that the government would be playing an inevitably losing game against international speculators, but that the Fisher plan would greatly aggravate a country's currency difficulties in times of crisis. Falling prices usually occur when business is disturbed and stagnant and when confidence is low. With the Fisher plan in effect, it is precisely at such a time that the greatest raids would be made upon the country's gold supply.

Professor Fisher has partly recognized the dangers of speculation against the government and believes he would avert them by fixing a spread of 1 per cent between the "buying price" and the "selling price" of gold. Such a spread, however, would be wholly ineffective against speculative operations extending over several months. Mr. Keynes —to anticipate—in recently advocating a return to a qualified gold standard, has suggested that the buying and selling prices of gold be separated by as much as 5 per cent. But this too would fail to prevent speculators from trading against the government when cumulative price changes were large enough; and it would permit a fluctuation of 5 per cent in exchange rates. As contrasted with present conditions, such a fluctuation may seem very small; but it might still be sufficient to hurt foreign trade to some extent, and it would certainly be sufficient practically to end any free international transfer of liquid funds. Mr. Keynes recognizes this second consequence and even welcomes it. It is true, of course, that it would, as he suggests, put an end to unwise international transfers of funds, but it would be just as effective in stopping necessary and desirable transfers. For example, a central bank subjected to a raid on its gold supply at home may desperately want temporarily to borrow funds from abroad; but it could not borrow except at an interest rate at least sufficient to cover any possible loss resulting to the lender from a fall in exchange to the lower gold point. Under normal conditions the international transfer of liquid funds, far from increasing the international flow of gold, greatly reduces it.

The unsophisticated may suppose that all these troubles

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could be averted by the simple refusal of the government or the central bank to redeem currency in gold at all. Such a move, however, would abolish the whole stabilization scheme itself, and neither Mr. Keynes nor Professor Fisher has recommended it. Only free redeemability can keep the currency at any desired value. Mere gold reserves in themselves, no matter how large, are wholly useless for this purpose unless they are actually employed. It is merely necessary to point to the fact that the dollar has already gone to a discount of 30 per cent in the few months since gold convertibility has been abandoned, though our gold reserves are not only hundreds of millions of dollars greater than they were in the first week of March, but greater than in the entire history of the Federal Reserve system.

If the Fisher plan were adopted internationally, at least the drawback of fluctuating exchange rates would not exist, and the speculative raids against the various central banks would be relatively much less than they would in the case of any country acting alone. But here a formidable political difficulty presents itself. We must either adopt separate index numbers of prices for different countries, or a single world index number. If we adopt separate index numbers, we come back again to the problem of fluctuating exchange rates. If we wish to adopt a single world index number, we have to face the fact that for short periods prices in different countries may move in different directions, and that while they tend to move in the same direction in the long run, they do not always change to precisely the same extent. This discrepancy occurs if only because some nations are dominantly agricultural and others dominantly industrial. Even assuming, therefore, that we could get all nations to agree on a common index number, the effect of its adoption would be sometimes to aggravate the price fluctuation in a given country rather than to offset it.

Mr. Keynes's stabilization plan is more difficult to describe than Professor Fisher's, if only because he leaves so much of it vague and has so frequently shifted his position. For the latter tendency, indeed, he might be called the Lloyd George among economists. His plan is, to begin with, much more complicated than the Fisher plan. Instead of permitting the buying and selling prices of gold to change automatically in accordance with changes in an index number, he would allow the central bank or a governing board to change these figures at its discretion. Without depending upon this measure alone, he would supplement it by permitting this board to regulate the volume of paper money more directly, and to regulate the volume of bank credit through changes in the discount rate, through open market operations, through the control of investment, and so on. Space does not permit a discussion of these measures in detail. It may be said, however, that they rest on several fundamentally false assumptions. It is not true that the price level bears any fixed or invariable relation to the quantity of money and credit outstanding. The quantity theory of money has been statistically discredited time and again since the outbreak of the war, but its adherents go blandly on. It is not true, again, that the volume of money and credit can be predictably controlled by changes in discount rates: low discount rates through several depression years did not prevent a continuous shrinkage in the volume of credit. Finally, the automatic changes in the gold-content of the currency as proposed in Professor Fisher's plan is, with all its drawbacks, infinitely preferable to changes by a political board as proposed by Mr. Keynes. For the decisions of such a board would almost certainly conform to political pressures rather than to economic facts. The political pressures in nearly every case would be for higher prices, almost never for lower prices. The farmers would demand higher prices; manufacturers would demand higher prices; and labor, instead of opposing higher prices, would much more probably demand higher wages. It is unlikely that the gold-content-fixing board would be any more above political influences than is the present Federal Reserve Board. The Federal Reserve Board not only failed to take any initiative in heading off the 1927-1929 boom, but actually turned down the belated application of the New York Federal Reserve Bank to raise its discount rate with that end in view.

We have, perhaps, one example of a country already on a "managed" currency. It is, at least, frequently cited by the managed-currency advocates. This is Sweden. Sweden was forced off the gold basis after Great Britain in September, 1931. Since then the currency has been allowed to sink to a discount of 30 per cent or more, and the official policy has been directed—in accordance with the ideas of Mr. Keynes—toward stabilizing internal prices even at the cost of a fluctuating exchange rate. The official index of prices has actually been more stable than that of any other country during this period.

Rufus S. Tucker, analyzing the situation more closely in *Barron's* weekly magazine of June 19, however, finds that this price average conceals two very diverse movements. The prices of imported goods between August, 1931, and February, 1933, rose 13 per cent, while the average price of domestic goods and of goods produced for export fell 9 per cent. The decline in the value of Swedish exports during approximately the same period was greater than the decline in American exports if both are measured in the same kind of currency. The total number of bankruptcies in Sweden in 1932 increased 25 per cent over those in 1931, compared with an increase in the United States of only 11 per cent in the same period. The most damaging figures are those for unemployment. By August and September, 1932, unemployment in Sweden was more than 50 per cent greater than in August and September, 1931. The increase in the number of trade-union members reported unemployed, between the end of August, 1931, and the end of February, 1933, was 144 per cent. In the United States the increase in trade-union unemployment in the same period was only 38 per cent. Before Sweden left the gold standard, unemployment among trade-union members was only two-thirds as great as in the United States; in February last it was greater.

These figures are enough to show that there is no magic in the stability of a mere average level of prices, or merely in the existence of a currency depreciation. And our analysis is not such as to lead us to place any confidence in the most serious proposals for currency "management" so far advanced. This does not mean that we need abandon currency or price stabilization as an ideal, but it does suggest that it is not wise to attempt it until monetary economists have agreed upon some plan that seems much more promising than any so far offered. It is to be remembered that Professor Fisher's plan has been before the public now for more than two decades, and Mr. Keynes's for at least one, but that neither plan has met with the approval of most of their fellow mone-

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tary economists. But the Fisher plan may prove to contain a valuable germ idea. It is at least sound in embodying the recognition that prices under the gold standard express a relationship between the value of gold on the one hand and the value of goods on the other; that more gold will buy more goods, and less gold less; and that changes in the gold content of the dollar are the quickest and most predictable way we yet know of to change the price level. For that reason the present writer suggested in March of last year the devaluation of the dollar as a desperate expedient to meet a desperate situation. I believe it has been our abandonment of the former gold parity, and the sharp depreciation of the dollar in anticipation of an ultimate cut in its gold content, that has mainly produced the violent rise of prices and the astonishing recovery in industry in the last few months. But a major operation to offset the most violent collapse of commodity prices in a century is one thing; a continuous series of monthly operations is quite another. Devaluation, we must never forget, depends for its workability upon the fact that it is not generally expected; for when it is, everyone will raid the gold supply in advance.

The immediate need is to return to the gold standard at a new level, certainly in collaboration with Great Britain, and preferably in collaboration with as many other nations as possible. For the future, let the President appoint several first-rate American monetary authorities (not politicians) to an international commission composed exclusively of such authorities, and assign to this commission the duty of reporting upon the possibility of managing currencies and the most promising plan, if any. Unless we turn the question over to such a commission first, we shall not be planning; we shall merely, as Sir Arthur Salter would put it, be improvising.

How to Reduce Your Light Bills

By JUDSON KING

THE power issue has reached the stage where the people of the United States have become acutely "rate conscious." Rate wars are in progress in every section of the nation. Such efforts would be multiplied if the officials and people of so many municipalities were not appalled at the expense and labor involved in an engagement with the power monopolies, with the likelihood of obtaining only a slight reduction in rates, or none at all, after a long conflict before a State utilities commission and in the courts. The progress of justifiable rate reduction would no doubt be speeded up if consumers were aware that a simple, effective method of determining honest electric rates has recently been developed, the legal soundness of which has been affirmed by the United States Supreme Court. The purpose of this article is to explain this new technique for the benefit of those who are in rebellion against excessive electric charges and want to know what to do and how to do it.

Assume that the League of Women Voters, or the Citizens' Union, or some other organization in a typical small city, town, or village has begun to study the power question with a practical end in view. A thirty-year franchise is about to expire, or they are resentful over excessive monthly bills. The power system which serves their municipality, let us say, is but one of many tied into a vast privately owned superpower system ultimately controlled from New York or Chicago. If they make the mistake of attempting to pry into the true "valuation" of the company with its holding-company ramifications, they will end in a hopeless muddle. Regulation through attempted determination of a "fair return" upon "valuation" has failed through the past twenty-five years.

Laying aside financial manuals and the company's annual report, they should start off with a study of costs. They should ask what it actually costs: (1) to *generate* a kilowatt hour of electric current at the switchboard in a power plant; (2) to send this kilowatt hour over a high voltage *transmission line* to a town; (3) to *distribute* this kilowatt hour from the step-down station at the city limits to a home, a store, a factory, or the city streets. In other words, they should find out average costs in both private and municipally owned systems. Common sense dictates that rates be based upon costs.

Our inquirers will soon discover that in a great modern steam or hydroelectric station the average cost of generation is from 2 mills to 5 mills a kilowatt hour; next, that it costs on the average 1 mill to 2 mills per kilowatt hour to transmit the current, say 100 miles. Getting down to "distribution" costs, however, they will encounter trouble, because the literature of neither the engineering societies nor private companies yields any light. The power trust desires to keep such information from the people, because this is the field of the large-scale looting. Great help, however, is available in the findings of a group of engineers now investigating distribution costs under the auspices of the New York Power Authority. Morris L. Cooke of Philadelphia, able consulting engineer and member of the Power Authority, has published the results of this inquiry as far as it has gone, and the volume is indispensable to investigators, since it contains information to be found nowhere else. The data used in this article are largely taken from the papers of the contributing engineers which are brought together in this book.*

If the search for basic facts is pursued with reasonable diligence, our citizens will soon find themselves possessed of sufficient information on which to base intelligent action. Meantime, city officials have been consulted and have become interested. A public hearing before the mayor and the city council is called, with the city attorney present. Also in attendance will be found the company's local attorney and engineer, supported by a distinguished holding-company attorney, sent from headquarters.

Out of courtesy the spokesman of the League of Women Voters, which started the fight and is probably the best informed group in town on the question, will be given the floor. She states that the women of the town, because of high rates, cannot use as much electric current as they need to relieve household drudgery; that they find private company rates vary greatly in comparable towns; that as a rule municipally owned plants sell current at much lower prices than private

* "What Electricity Costs." A Symposium on the Cost of Distribution to Domestic and Rural Consumers, edited by Morris Llewellyn Cooke. Published by The New Republic, Inc., New York. $1.

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companies; that women are paying an average of 8 cents per kilowatt hour for domestic power service, while factory users and the street-car company buy it for 2 cents or less. This looks like discrimination. She would like to have the company's engineer explain whether he employs any scientific method in keeping records or determining the cost of current to different classes of consumers.

The company engineer replies that rate schedules are fixed in New York; that he is not required to keep such accounts; and (growing embarrassed) that "no one really knows. . ." The suave holding-company attorney, sensing danger, breaks in with some such explanation as this:

"Mr. Chairman, if I may be permitted, the answer to the lady's question lies in the tremendous cost of distributing electric energy in small quantities to thousands of residence meters scattered over this municipality as contrasted with the low cost of delivering a huge block of current to one meter, for instance in a factory. Potatoes cannot be delivered to your back door by the peck as cheaply as by the carload to a warehouse. The cost of generating current in huge volume is now so low that we could well-nigh afford to give it to you, if that were all. It is this expensive distribution that causes what you mistakenly consider excessive rates.

"The capital invested in our great XYZ system, which serves this town, is $492,000,000. You are served by gigantic hydro and steam generating plants with a vast network of expensive transmission and distribution lines. By established legal practice, the valuation of this entire system must be used as a rate base and your rate allocated so that you pay merely your just share of a fair return upon the total capital structure, which is only reasonable and . . ."

The city attorney interrupts: "Mr. Chairman, just a moment. The gentleman is wrong. In the Martinsville, Indiana, case, decided January 9, this year, the United States Supreme Court held, in effect, that valuation of an entire superpower system is not necessary to establish a rate base. Martinsville took the average system cost per kilowatt hour of delivering current to the city's gateway. It then added the ascertained local step-down and distribution cost per kilowatt hour, and so fixed the schedules. Roy Husselman, a Cleveland engineer employed by the city, has given an interesting history of this case in a paper which I have read in conjunction with the decisions of the federal courts. Hence, we can disregard this vast capitalization, including water, over which my friend grows so eloquent, and first turn our attention to what it costs to deliver current at the door of our city."

The mayor asks: "What was the wholesale cost at Martinsville?"

The city attorney answers: "On that system it was 1.72 cents per kilowatt hour."

A spokesman for the Citizens' Union chimes in: "That's about right. An engineer by the name of T. Herbert Clegg made a study of the wholesale prices paid to private systems by forty-five municipalities which owned their own distribution lines. The figures ran from 9 mills to 2.6 cents per kilowatt hour, with an average of 1.25 cents. He found large and medium-sized factories paying an average of 1.5 cents and large consumers, like railways, 9 mills per kilowatt hour, or even less. This gives us reasonably accurate figures on wholesale prices from private companies on which to base our tentative estimates."

"Very well," remarks the chairman, "what does it cost to distribute current within the city limits? That seems to be the big mystery."

A member of the city council gets the floor. "I have been studying that point. Major Clayton W. Pike, consulting engineer retained by the New York Power Authority, analyzed the official reports of the private power companies doing business in that State. He found that the average State-wide local distributing cost for domestic users was 2.36 cents per kilowatt hour. I noted also that in public systems domestic distribution costs are much less. In London, Ontario, it is 5.5 mills per kilowatt hour, as shown in the paper by Engineer E. V. Buchanan. London is a member of the great superpower system of Ontario. Engineer E. F. Scattergood of the Los Angeles public plant reports 1.68 cents per kilowatt hour, and Engineer J. D. Ross of Seattle's City Light reports 1.68 cents. These contrasts give us something to think about if we are aiming at the cheapest possible electric service for our town. The difference in distribution costs as between the public plants noted puzzled me until I found that Ontario municipalities finance plant construction and extensions wholly from bonds, sell at cost (which includes both capital and operating costs), and have a monopoly, whereas the Seattle plant competes with a private company and finances a good deal of plant extension out of profits, which keeps their rates higher to that extent. Los Angeles also could reduce rates if it did not finance considerable construction and improvements from surplus profits."

The local company counsel rises to remark: "The fallacy in the argument lies in the fact that these municipal plants do not pay taxes, while we contribute hundreds of dollars in taxes every year." Whereat a delegate from the women's group responds with cool sarcasm: "Well, we have found out that you only pay 2 or 3 *mills* per kilowatt hour for taxes, while we deserve a rate reduction of several *cents* per kilowatt hour. Besides which, you do not amortize your investment and pay off your debt which serves as a rate base, while the public plants do. So that's that!"

After the laughter subsides the chairman of the Citizens' Union is recognized. "The ladies appear to want double the amount of electricity for the same price. That may seem unreasonable, but their demand is justified by a remarkable chart, exhibited by Engineer Ross of Seattle at the New York conference and reproduced in Mr. Cooke's book. I have had it copied on this huge cardboard so that you all might see it." He exhibits the following table:

EFFECT OF COST ON USE

1931	*Rate (Cents)*	*Average Consumption Kilowatt Hours Monthly*	*Yearly*	*Average Bill Monthly*	*Yearly*
All Private Power Concerns in U. S.	5.78	48.6	583.2	$2.81	$33.72
Twenty-six Cities of Ontario	1.45	148.3	1,779.6	2.14	25.68
Seattle Municipal Plant	2.818	91.5	1,098.0	2.68	30.94
Tacoma Municipal Plant	1.726	129.2	1,550.3	2.23	26.77
Winnipeg Municipal Plant	.879	347.0	4,169.0	3.05	36.64

"This proves," he continues, "that low rates are the real salesmen for large domestic usage. Note that Winnipeg householders, paying less than 1 cent per kilowatt hour, buy

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on the average nearly 350 kilowatt hours per month, or seven times as much as the average United States householder, who pays nearly 6 cents and uses less than 50 kilowatt hours."

It is next brought out by the engineer of the city water works that Major Pike has devised a simple formula by the aid of which city authorities, or any group, with the help of an electrical engineer, can work out an approximate rate schedule which will provide lower rates and yet be just to the company, or equally well serve as a guide for the rates of a prospective municipal plant. The editor of a local paper expresses fear that all this agitation, especially for lower rates, will decrease the value of utility securities, many thousands of dollars of which are owned by local citizens, including widows and orphans. He is answered by a business man, who says: "It will have a bad effect only on speculative stocks. Having lost several thousand dollars in Insull holding-company securities, I have my eye teeth cut. If the electrical industry is not going to abandon that sort of business and get down to an honest return on an honest investment in its operating companies, the quicker we know it the better."

The local banker, who carries the private company's deposits, will here doubtless want to know by what process such results could possibly be achieved by novices even with the aid of an engineer. An electrical worker responds: "That is simple. First get your wholesale cost, say 1½ cents per kilowatt hour. Next get the sub-station cost of stepping down the current from high to low voltage. Engineer Otto M. Rau shows it to be around 3 mills per kilowatt hour. Next make an inventory of the company's property used in distribution—the number of poles, length of wire, underground ducts, number and kind of transformers, meters, and so on. Make that inventory for each class of customers, such as stores, factories, streets, and homes. These figures computed with reference to load factor and other factors in Major Pike's formula such as density, measured by the length of wire per average customer, the percentage of wires under ground, the number of kilowatt hours used, and so forth, will give the base for reasonably accurate rate schedules. Add to the wholesale cost, which is fixed, the distribution cost in each class, and you get an average rate for each class of customers. By such a process the average domestic rate in this town ought not to exceed 4 cents per kilowatt hour. We are paying 8 cents. I could almost do the job myself, but I would like to work at it with an engineer."

The discussion concludes. The chairman of the League of Women Voters moves, and the motion is seconded by the chairman of the Citizens' Union, "that it is the sense of the citizens' groups that the city council should employ an independent electrical engineer to make an inventory of the company's property within the city limits, and that if the money available in the city treasury for such a purpose is not enough it be supplemented by a fund raised by popular subscription."

Enterprising citizens will have little difficulty in getting official action. If the mayor or the city council has not originated the move, they will at this time take the lead. At the close of the meeting the city attorney will remark:

"I congratulate you on this action. I have long doubted the advisability of launching a rate case of the usual sort against this powerful monopoly. However, with this new method, I am sure we can establish a case which neither the State commission nor the courts can ignore or overthrow. With a minimum expenditure of time and money we can secure lower rates. The Martinsville case opens the legal door. If this fails, our only recourse is a municipal plant."

[*This is the eighth of a series of articles on electric power and the consumer. The ninth will appear soon.*]

Czecho-Slovakia's Nazi Neighbors

By EGON ERWIN KISCH

THERE is life in the border hills again. As once King Frederick and later Napoleon studied the maps of the mountain range that separates Silesia and Saxony from Bohemia, considering the relative merits of the passes of Nollendorf, Kulm, and Zinnwald, so German pacifists are studying them today. They and many others—the men and women who have made their escape from the great concentration camp that the masters of Germany have called "Grosse Erhebung" (the great upheaval), and the many victims of that form of "national" training that finds expression in castor oil, steel whips, mutilation, pogroms, suicides, and shooting "while trying to escape." All of them are making a desperate attempt to find their way into Czecho-Slovakia over the wild ridges and passes of the frontier.

A day of precipitous flight from the home to the station to catch any train that approaches the border region is followed by a night on foot along lonely, densely overgrown, and often dangerous footpaths. Everywhere the Brown Terror is on the watch. In the border inns whole divisions of Nazis are quartered. Nazi patrols crash through the shrubbery with their bloodhounds. Nazi watchmen are placed on look-out posts with powerful field glasses and searchlights. At every railroad crossing storm troopers, armed with carbines, stand guard. Nor is he safe who has managed to put the frontier posts behind him. Hitler's hangmen get their victims from Czecho-Slovakian territory with impunity. The Nazis in the German sections of Czecho-Slovakia render eager assistance; there is a liberal price on the head of every fugitive.

In Kreibitz a fugitive is given shelter by his comrades. In the middle of the night an automobile drives up to the house. A "comrade" who has secretly joined the Nazis is at the door with three "fugitives," for whom he begs temporary refuge. Before the householder can reply they have spied his guest. Revolvers are drawn, the helpless victim is stunned with blows on the head, kicked down the stairs, and dragged senseless into the automobile. No one has seen him since.

Regular battles have occurred in these frontier towns. In the night preceding Sunday, March 5, twenty workers returning from a festival arranged by a local workers' singing society were attacked and shot at on Czecho-Slovakian soil in front of the Gasthaus Blechhammer near Weipert by from sixty to eighty heavily armed SA *(Sturm-Abteilung)* and SS *(Schutz-Staffel)* troopers from the German towns of

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Bärenstein and Kühnburg. In Weipert itself three workers were overpowered by German SA troopers and taken across the border. The Czecho-Slovakian authorities ordered an investigation of the incident but no official statement has so far been forthcoming; it is said, however, that the garrison stationed at Weipert has been increased to 150 men.

In Ullersdorf, between Grottau and Zittau, according to a notice in the Reichenberger *Vorwärts,* German storm divisions, aided by the Czecho-Slovakian gendarmerie and custom guards, searched the homes of workers who were known to the Socialist functionaries, looking for refugees. They alleged they were looking for smuggled goods. A few days later Czecho-Slovakian gendarmes from Platten arrested the Communist, Franz Nesvetal, a municipal councilor from Johanngeorgenstadt in Saxony who had sought and found refuge in the Barringer territory, and delivered him across the border into the hands of SA troopers.

But there is really no need of the all too willing Czech police. The SA man is sufficient unto himself since he no longer fears persecution for his misdeeds at the hands of a protecting government. A troop of these fellows makes a pleasure trip across the border to Ebersdorf, for instance, in the Friedland district. On reaching their destination they kidnap the young worker, Elster, for having distributed leaflets during the municipal-election campaign, and escort him to Görlitz, in Prussian Silesia.

Such happenings are customary in China. There it is not uncommon to hear that a provincial ruler has kidnapped a man from the neighboring province. Indeed, Europeans, Americans, and Japanese have justified a highly profitable interference in China with the argument that such kidnappings are permitted there; a nation, they argue, that is not able to protect the personal safety of its inhabitants cannot be intrusted with the management of its own affairs.

On the night of Wednesday, March 15, SA soldiers crossed the Erzgebirge frontier and made their way to Katharinaberg to search for two Social Democratic families which had fled from Germany. They forced their way into the Hotel Adler but their victims had already departed. Two young persons who were about to leave the hostelry were commanded to raise their hands. One of them, a young Social Democrat named Albin Schmieder, did not immediately obey their order. He was shot down and beaten with rubber clubs. In the hospital at Bruex it was found that he had been shot through the lung and was in a serious condition.

In Stolzenhain, on Czecho-Slovakian territory, is a vacation camp maintained by Jewish sport organizations. On March 16 at exactly 9 p.m. it was attacked and shot at by German Nazis. The gendarmerie patrol made an effort to arrest the attackers, but they wrested the gun out of the hands of one gendarme and forced the other at the point of a revolver to drop his weapon. Both policemen were then brutally beaten. The Nazi attackers withdrew jubilantly into the Dritte Reich, carrying with them the guns they had taken from the Czech guards.

Their next victim was Johann Ullsperger, who lives in Schwaderbach, a Czecho-Slovakian village, but has a little shop on German soil in which he manufactures parts for harmonicas. On Thursday, April 27, a small boy came to his home with a message that a customer was waiting for him in his shop. Ullsperger hurried over, was taken into custody by an SA trooper from Rodewisch, and carried off, no one knows where. Two brothers named Walter from Dittersbach and the thirteen-year-old son of one of them were attacked and beaten in a woods in Kunnersdorf and carried off as prisoners. From Schwaderbach three young workers, Gustav Langhammer, Max Sattler, and Theodor Müller, were taken to Klingenthal.

The train that runs between Reichenberg and Warnsdorf crosses German territory for a short distance where the borderline projects at a sharp angle into Bohemia. But the interior of the cars is, according to international agreement, under Czecho-Slovakian jurisdiction. Nevertheless, storm troopers arrest whom, when, and where they please, and they know where their victims may be reached. Their Nazi comrades in the enemy's country take care of that. It is their business to know who is a Socialist and when he crosses the border. And those who live on the frontier can hardly avoid an occasional trip into the neighboring country.

In many Bohemian families in that part of the country it is traditional for the men of the family to cross the border each morning to their daily work in the factories of Saxony. The great-grandfather began it, and grandfather, father, son, and grandson became in turn seasonal workers in Germany. What they did with their evenings, Sundays, and holidays in Bohemia no factory owner, foreman, or colleague at the work bench ever bothered to inquire. At home they were municipal councilors or star-gazers, Socialists or herb doctors, free thinkers or beer drinkers, book worms or card players. No one knew or cared. Under the Nazis all this is changed. Incur the enmity of a Nazi in Bohemia and you lose your job at the work bench at which your great-grandfather worked before you.

Worse still is the lot of those who, like frontier folk everywhere, make their living off the price ratio on either side of the border. The unemployed Bohemian who attempts to eke out a precarious existence by smuggling salt, tobacco, Black Forest clocks, bridge cards, pine-needle bath salts, or cigarette lighters across the border must beware, if he is in bad with the Nazis at home, not only of the customs guards but of the SA as well, to whom his most secret paths are betrayed.

Self-protective organizations called into being by Social Democrats and Communists to defend their members from National Socialist attacks have been suppressed by the government. Officially Czecho-Slovakia is adhering to a middle course, striking out against all extremists both right and left, in the interests of democratic government. Actually the Czech democracy is helping fascism into the saddle.

The Memory of Music

By IRWIN EDMAN

The memory of music
Itself is music; deep
Below the singing heard by ears,
It murmurs, half asleep.

Till at some twilight wakened,
It brings the heart release,
Its glory now an echo,
Its echo soft with peace.

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More Relief for the Farmers

By MAURITZ A. HALLGREN

Washington, July 12

ON July 9 the government began collecting a processing tax of 30 cents on every bushel of wheat used in the manufacture of food products for domestic consumption. The tax is to be levied whether the wheat is grown in this country or shipped in from abroad. In the latter connection it serves automatically to increase the present 42-cent tariff on wheat to 72 cents. The tax will not be applied against wheat destined for export or for the farmer's own use. The proceeds of the levy are to be distributed as a form of government bounty or subsidy to farmers who agree to reduce their wheat acreage in 1934 and 1935.

This is the first definite measure of major importance taken under that section of the Roosevelt recovery program dealing with the needs of the farmers. Since May 12, when the new farm relief act became effective, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration has been perfecting its own organization, a task not yet completed. It has been gathering and analyzing statistics to determine how much acreage should be taken out of production and the amount of the processing tax to be levied against wheat, cotton, tobacco, and other farm products that come within the scope of the law. It has had thousands of agents in the field, assembling information and explaining to the farmers the purposes and requirements of this newest farm-relief program.

No little courage was needed to proclaim a wheat-processing tax in face of the recent tremendous rise in grain prices. The price of wheat had already increased approximately 100 per cent, May futures going as high as $1 on the Chicago Board of Trade, when the announcement was made. The tax would have the effect of adding another 30 per cent. The potential price of wheat products would thereby be increased, and that might antagonize the consumers. It was also possible that the farmers might not take kindly to the idea of reducing their acreage at a time when a rising market appeared to promise a fair return on their normal production. Yet Secretary of Agriculture Wallace and his assistants saw clearly that the price rise was due to abnormal conditions. The shortness of the 1933 crop, gambling in grains by brokers and private speculators, and several other factors contributed to the rise. A full crop next year, which would necessarily mean an increase in the existing surplus, would unquestionably bring the price down again, leading perhaps to renewed demoralization of agriculture. Hence it was decided to put the allotment plan into effect at once so that it would be in operation before the farmers began sowing the 1934 crop. In no other way could the administration be assured that production next year would be adjusted to the estimated needs of the country, which is one of the objectives of the recovery program.

Other processing taxes are to be proclaimed within a short time. The tax on cotton is to be put into effect on August 1, and the remainder soon thereafter. The preliminary work on these matters can be undertaken in Washington, for they have to do largely with statistics. But no processing tax and no acreage-reduction plan could possibly succeed unless the farmers were disposed to cooperate with the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. The National Recovery Administration can center its efforts almost entirely in Washington. The manufacturing industries are so organized that they can send representatives here to work out agreements with General Hugh S. Johnson's office. The agricultural administration, on the other hand, must deal with millions of farmers spread over the country. Neither Secretary Wallace nor George Peek, the agricultural administrator, can enter into a single agreement with the farming industry as a whole or even with any specialized branch of that industry. They have to negotiate a separate agreement with each individual farmer. In order to arrive at an equitable understanding in each case, as well as to obtain the cooperation of the farmers as a whole, the agricultural administration has been compelled to assemble a gigantic corps of field agents, and this corps will in all likelihood have to be increased rather than reduced in size as the farm recovery plan is put into complete operation.

In the last several weeks I have discussed the Roosevelt farm program with sixty or more farmers in various sections of Maryland and Virginia. I have found about three out of four skeptical as to the outcome of the administration plan but nevertheless willing to go along with that program. Probably 10 to 15 per cent of the farmers were enthusiastic, convinced that the program would prove successful in all its essential aims. Another 10 per cent were just as convinced that the scheme would fail, and in any case were not inclined to cooperate unless compelled to do so. Judging by both official and private reports received here, the latter in the form of press association dispatches from the farm centers, the frame of mind of the agricultural population as a whole is about as I found it in Virginia and Maryland.

This is not to say that the farmers are not anxious to squeeze whatever personal or selfish advantage they can out of the relief plan. When the cotton growers were asked, with a view to estimating how much of their land should be taken out of production, how much cotton they had raised in the last five years, many of them padded their reports, in some instances by as much as 250 per cent, for they were to be compensated for the acreage plowed under in accordance with the productivity of their land. It was no doubt a tactical mistake for the literal-minded subordinate officials of the agricultural administration to publish the fact that the cotton growers were seeking to take advantage of the situation. When Secretary Wallace, who was absent at the time, returned to Washington, he promptly issued a denial. He probably saw that even the slightest suggestion that one group of farmers was not cooperating wholeheartedly and unselfishly would have an adverse effect on the attitude of other groups.

Where or with whom the idea arose of asking the cotton farmers to plow under a part of their growing cotton is not clear. Late in June Charles J. Brand, co-administrator, declared that 25 per cent of the growing crop would have to be destroyed forthwith in order to prevent an increase in the existing surplus, which Brand felt might drive the price

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down to somewhere around 3 cents a pound. On the same day President Roosevelt threw his weight behind this proposal, declaring he had "every confidence that the cotton producer will face the facts and cooperate fully in the reasonable and practical plan that is proposed." It will be recalled that on August 12, 1931, Herbert Hoover's Farm Board proposed "the immediate plowing under of every third row of cotton now growing." This suggestion was universally condemned. *The Nation,* for one, declared:

> Even conceding that it were possible to put such a plan into effect it would be little short of criminal. This does not mean that the members of the Farm Board who suggested the plan had themselves any criminal intent; they are merely well-intentioned men whose economic beliefs are simple, naive, and tragically muddle-headed. Why is cotton down? Because there is an oversupply. Therefore we need simply destroy the surplus, and everything will be well. That is the essence of the Farm Board's economics. But if it works for cotton, it should work for everything else. . . . Therefore let the nations of the world take hundreds of millions of bushels of wheat, thousands of tons of sugar, rubber, and copper, and millions of barrels of oil and dump them all into the sea. Then prices will go up, prosperity will return with a rush, we shall all be jubilant, and a Republican victory will be assured.

The producers have been rather reluctantly subscribing to this latest proposal to destroy a part of the cotton crop. For sentimental reasons they are opposed to plowing under growing plants upon which they have spent a great deal of labor. And they feel that with prices rising they may stand to realize more by selling all of their crop on the open market than by destroying a part of it in return for a government subsidy. However, the agricultural administration's corps of 22,000 special agents in the cotton belt (most of whom, it must be said, are volunteer workers) have been convincing the producers that they stand to gain more in terms of hard cash by cooperating with the government than by gambling on a continued rise in the cotton market. While the cotton-destruction campaign is still far from its goal, enough farmers have already agreed to the plan to make it appear certain that some time before the end of the present year more than 1,600,000,000 pounds of growing cotton, worth at the present market more than $160,000,000, will be plowed under. Whether this will suffice to buoy up the market and bring the cotton grower an equitable return on his investment and labor remains to be seen.

It is a curious fact that while agricultural prices have been rising in the last few months, the operation of the Agricultural Adjustment Act has had nothing directly to do with that rise, for the law, to all practical purposes, has only now begun operating. While the Roosevelt program is designed to increase farm prices, the present boom may result disastrously for that program. Upon several occasions since 1929 the farmers have been misled by false booms. In October and November, 1931, wheat rose 25 cents. The usual ballyhoo about the return of prosperity appeared in the daily press and the trade journals. *Bradstreet's* weekly review reported that "the farmers are benefited by the advance and their buying is expected to be a factor in helping a return to prosperity." Actually, however, little wheat was coming into the markets from the farms, and when it began to arrive in fairly large quantities late in November, the speculators, to quote the New York *Evening Post,* took advantage of the situation "to unload on the first 10-cent break." Again in the summer of 1932 hog prices started up, rising from $3.50 late in May to $5.55 in the second week of July. And again cheery headlines appeared: Live Stock Rise Heartens Farmers and West Smiles Again as Hog Prices Rise. The latter headline appeared over a Chicago dispatch to the New York *Times,* which reported that the live-stock boom was "causing the Western farmer to smile again and the nation in general to feel that beef and pork may be leading the way upward from the depression." But further down in the same dispatch may be found the real explanation for the rise:

> When prices were lowest early in the spring no one apparently wanted cattle, hogs, or sheep. Farmers were broke, or so nearly so that they were almost panicky in trying to sell their live stock to pay rent, mortgages, and other expenses. It was said to be one of the best clean-outs that the industry has known in years. . . . Suddenly it was discovered that the liquidation from the farms had run its course.

And then hog prices began to go up. The farmer had been cleaned out and could not take advantage of the rise at that time, but when he again had marketable live stock to dispose of prices promptly slumped.

There is little question that the disillusionment created by these false booms contributed to the political revolt against the Hoover Administration. Secretary Wallace appears to realize that something of the same sort may happen if the present boom collapses. There is first the natural inclination of the average citizen to blame his misfortunes on the political powers. Secondly, the extraordinary publicity received by the Roosevelt farm program has tended to identify the price rise with the operation of that program. If prices should now go down, many farmers will be disposed to attribute the downturn to the failure of the Roosevelt program or to the shortcomings of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. That obviously would make it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain their cooperation, which is essential to the success of the program. It was doubtless for this reason that Wallace some weeks ago warned the grain trade against allowing the boom to make too rapid headway.

The increase in industrial prices has likewise disturbed the Roosevelt Administration. Here, indeed, lies the real problem. If the prices of the things the farmers must buy go up, the farmers will be relatively no better off than they are now even though farm prices also go up. Yet it is hard to see how this can be prevented. A bull market in grains or cotton is almost always accompanied by a rise in other commodity prices. Moreover, the second major objective of the Roosevelt Administration is to increase the purchasing power of the urban workers. To the extent that this will enable city dwellers to buy more farm produce the farmers will be helped, but to increase the pay of the factory mechanic and city worker is also to add to the cost of producing the tools and other goods the farmer needs, and increased production costs invariably lead to higher prices. The outward implications of this problem seem to be understood by Wallace, Peek, Johnson, and other officials concerned. General Johnson has warned industry against "any wild-cat price lifting." Wallace has threatened to bring anti-trust proceedings against profiteers. But unless these officials know how to balance industrial production costs (i. e., prices) and urban purchasing power against farm income they are likely

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to fall far short of their goal. And there is no certain evidence that they do know how to strike such a balance.

Some officials seem to belief that the trick can be turned by restoring prices to the 1909-13 level. "We chose that period," Wallace has said, "because the prices the farmers got for their crops in those years and the prices they paid for manufactured goods and urban services most nearly approached an equitable relationship." It is possible, of course, that basic conditions may have changed so greatly in the meantime that a return to the 1909-13 price levels will not bring about the balance desired. Other officials have talked a great deal about the necessity of controlling prices and preventing "extortionate practices," but they speak in the vaguest and most general terms. When General Johnson was asked to explain the meaning of some of these terms, he replied: "Now, I can't sit here and define the beginning of extortion and extortionate prices. But the American public damn well knows what they mean." Unhappily, the American public does not. Nor could anyone know what constitutes an unfair or inequitable industrial price level, from the standpoint of the farmer's economic interests, unless a really serious and scientific effort were made to balance all of the factors entering into the national economy, including savings, investments, prices, wages, and profits. There is no indication that the Roosevelt Administration has anything of the sort in mind.

"I Don't Believe in Democracy"

By ROBERT HERRICK

HER finger nails were so vividly red that one could not for long keep one's eyes off them; her black eyebrows were plucked to a thin line; a broad smiling mouth. A product of Chicago, all the blood in her for two generations being drawn from Chicago, she was a neighbor of the late lamented Insull—or she had been until the utility magnate transferred his residence from Chicago to Athens.

"A nice man," she assured me, "and a very good neighbor!" (She explained how he had good-naturedly let her have milk from his prize herd, which had greatly benefited her children.)

"All the same he was an expensive citizen for many of his neighbors," I suggested.

She fired at once. "Oh, Sam Insull is all right—he was just unfortunate. If this dreadful depression hadn't upset everything, we should all have been for him still, as we all were before."

I recalled the last tale I had heard of a widow who had been advised to put her husband's insurance money into one of the numerous Insull holding companies and was now literally in the bread line.

"If she had made some money in it, she would have thought him a grand man," the ruby-red-fingered lady commented cynically.

"Just the same," I suggested, "he is no better than a common thief who has taken money from his employer's till." She looked at me coldly out of the almond eyes from under the plucked eyebrows. "Why?" she said. "He was just unlucky. If we had gone on making money with him, as we once did, we shouldn't have cared *how* he made it!"

"Even when he took the securities of his sound companies that were already pledged and put them up at the banks as collateral for his personal loans?"

That was a too subtle distinction. She came back to the old argument of ends and means. "He used the money to sustain the market for all his stocks, didn't he?"

"At least, it was bad judgment! And what's worse, he didn't own the securities. They belonged to the holders of the debentures he had sold to the public."

She shrugged her not unlovely shoulders as though to say I was becoming tiresome. It was merely human to grasp at any straw when one was drowning, even somebody else's straw. It was evidently time to change the topic. "You know Mrs. L.?" she asked, and we talked about Chicago acquaintances. "The poor L's—they have lost everything, *everything* they had, in Kreuger and Toll!"

"Oh!"

"Yes, the son-in-law was with Lee, Higginson, and he put *all* their money into Kreuger and Toll!"

"More unfortunates who guessed wrong," I murmured.

"All the partners lost too," she said proudly.

Remembering a handsome villa where one of the partners still lived in comparative affluence I ventured: "Not quite everything. At least D. didn't!"

"Oh, that's his wife's money—she was a very rich woman, you know."

I recalled a Boston gentleman who had said of these unfortunate bankers: "They are all honorable men, every one of them! Why, Frank X is a cousin of mine—I won't believe anything bad of them!" (At what point do negligence, incompetence, and stupidity become criminal? But the cousin of Frank X was no more interested in such ethical subtleties than my red-fingernailed lady.) We turned to broader topics—the banking situation, the government, which she regarded as a joke, the outlook for the future.

"What this country needs," she announced with an air of newly discovered wisdom, "is leadership! Most people are morons." She stretched the red fingernails toward the cigarette box, accepted a light, and after a long inhalation turned full upon me. "I don't believe in democracy anyway!" she said daringly.

"No? Not really!"

"The mass of people are morons," she repeated. "How should they know what is good for them? They have to be told."

"By the Insulls, the Kreugers, the Lee, Higginsons, the Mitchells, the—

She interrupted my honor role of American leadership, and looking at me as if I were the ambassador from Moscow she shot back: "No thinking person these days believes in democracy!"

"Have we ever tried it—yet?" I protested weakly.

"Democracy has failed," she pronounced positively, "it's time we tried something else."

"So? And who is *your* candidate for dictator? Sam Insull or Smedley Butler?"

She looked at me witheringly out of those slits beneath the plucked eyebrows, but before she could annihilate me our hostess intervened—"We'll have our coffee in the garden."

Chicago, I reflected, was surely growing up when its

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leading citizenesses had so entirely outgrown the democratic ideal. Mrs L. (the lady whose son-in-law was one of those confiding bankers that intrusted their personal fortunes and those of innumerable clients to the match king) also did not believe in democracy the last time I met her; she had talked with glib disdain of "morons," meaning plain people, and "strong men," meaning Kreugers, Insulls, Mitchells, et al.—although her grandfather had entered the United States via Ellis Island. Was that to be woman's special contribution to our political life—contempt for democracy, admiration for fascism? Perhaps. No women's voices have been raised in denunciation of the crooked bankers, the thieving promoters, and all the other maggots that have been eating at our social foundations. No woman stockholder (and few men) has ever protested against hundred-thousand-dollar executive salaries and million-dollar bonuses. "To those that have it shall be given, and from those who have not even the little that they have shall be taken away"—so runs Holy Writ (but not in their sense!).

To an old-fashioned American like myself this universal indifference to dishonesty, the moral callousness of our supposably "best people," is the amazing fact of the day. Mr. Lewis correctly portrays his intelligent modern heroine as caring nothing whatever about her grafting lover's crime, but only about the unlucky fact that he got caught and had to go to prison for a few months. It may be that our troubles lie deeper than unbalanced budgets, mortgage indebtedness which cannot be paid, unemployment, and the gold standard, all those problems they are frantically fussing over in Washington these days. The social infection which manifests itself in so many unpleasant symptoms may lie in the very fiber of American character itself, which no longer condemns crime when it attains six figures. Democracy, if it is to work at all requires a belief at least in the ideal of common honesty.

In the Driftway

THE Drifter, who has recently been drifting through the wide open spaces of this great nation, namely the Middle Western empire known as God's country, can report with confidence that fundamentally America stands firm. Iowa farmers may take the law into their own hands and put a rope around its neck; the unemployed may march to county courthouses and demand food for which they have not worked; but the fresh vegetable, that much publicized, vitamin-bearing commodity which modern children are being taught from the cradle to insist upon, has made no headway in the average American restaurant. The Drifter's experience of home cooking during his wanderings was limited, and he cannot be certain of his generalizations in that sphere, but he has a strong impression that there, too, the can is mightier than the word of dietitians, doctors, and writers for the women's pages.

* * * * *

CANNED goods, like the *Saturday Evening Post*, are uniform in quality and everywhere easily available. Also, they will keep indefinitely. Both will be just as good two years from now as they are at present. The fact that they are less nourishing and quite tasteless by comparison with the fresher, harder-won varieties, is apparently unavailing even when it is known—which is perhaps not surprising in a country whose citizens elect Republicans regularly until a depression comes along and then can think of nothing better to do than elect Democrats.

* * * * *

WHY, as a people, we prefer canned goods to fresh is a question that interests the Drifter profoundly. He is convinced that it is not laziness. He is inclined to think it is a logical product of our national experience and traditions. The prospector in his mountain camp looked upon a canned vegetable as the immensely desirable thing it then was, just as anything in print that got as far as California seemed to him the word of truth. The Drifter as a child preferred canned vegetables to fresh, mainly, he thinks, because the can looked citified and exotic and impressive. The fresh peas in the kitchen garden seemed dull in comparison. Likewise he believed everything he saw in newspapers and he thought Harold Bell Wright was a great writer. It is only after continuous and omniverous reading that a child grows tired of his favorites and feels the need for something stronger. It is only when one cultivates a taste for food that one discovers the superiority of fresh vegetables. The average American reads only because the office is closed or the golf links is not open. He eats only to satisfy hunger.

* * * * *

THE Drifter does not presume to quarrel with this attitude toward books and food. He merely reflects that if it were otherwise he would find the average restaurant more to his liking. He would, it is true, also miss an occasional amusing experience. Recently in a restaurant in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, he asked the waitress if she had any fresh vegetables. She bit her pencil and thought deeply for a moment. "No," she said finally, "the vegetables today are potatoes and macaroni, and neither one of 'em is fresh."

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Puritanism in Russia

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

There was a bad inaccuracy in the review of my book by your Russian correspondent, Louis Fischer. Mr. Fischer speaks of Arnold Soltz as representing the extreme puritanical views in sex behavior as against Madame Kollontay's preaching of greater freedom. But Soltz, a member of the Central Control Commission and a man whose opinions carry great weight in Russia, is actually very liberal. Mr. Fischer was confusing Soltz and Professor Zalkind, an error forgivable in a ten-day tourist but a little surprising in a resident correspondent. It would be like confusing John S. Sumner with Judge Ben Lindsey in America.

Your reviewer gave the erroneous impression that the author of "Red Virtue" was a "hasty" tourist who knew no Russian. This is unfortunate since the jacket remarks about "Red Virtue" happen to be true. Mr. Fischer thinks the title unfortunate. He may be unaware that Socrates used the word "virtue" to mean "intelligence" or "wisdom," and this is the

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sense in which it was used in the title of my book—a sense, I may remark, most reviewers have gratifyingly well understood.

I may add that I was a little mystified by your reviewer's remark that he approached my book with prejudice because he considered me ill-qualified to undertake the task of writing it. It was Louis Fischer who suggested I write this book on just this subject.

Carmel, Cal., June 20 ELLA WINTER

Loan to China Is Opposed

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

On June 4 the United States government, through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, lent to the Nanking Government in China $50,000,000, not in cash, but in wheat and cotton. The entire quantity is to be shipped in American ships; the wheat is to be floured here; and the principal of the loan is guaranteed by a lien on taxes.

It happens that the last harvest was the best in China in a generation, both in wheat and in rice. China does not need wheat, and the market price of wheat on the Chinese market is lower than the American market price. Furthermore, China could profit by milling its own wheat. Finally, if wheat had to be bought, it could be more cheaply bought in markets nearer home.

These facts immediately show that the United States, taking advantage of its control over the puppet government of Chiang Kai-shek, is dumping wheat on the Chinese market. Thus, it further disorganizes and pauperizes the Chinese wheat growers and peasants. When the peasants prepared for the sowing they borrowed money from the usurers for supplies, rent, etc., on the promise of the probable money yield of the crop. Now they are faced with a greatly reduced return—and hence their further impoverishment. This "loan" has added $50,000,000 to the burden of the peasants.

This loan, furthermore, has been made to the Nanking Government—one of several in China. Besides the Nanking Government, there is the Cantonese, and the large Soviet districts which have a constitution and democratically elected officials of their own. It is perfectly evident that this loan has been made without regard for any interests but those of the American imperialists. Not only will the loan disorganize the Chinese market, but it is the Chinese people who will in the long run have to pay in taxes the exorbitant price for the wheat. They are forced to buy their own poison! The United States is relieving itself of its overburdening surpluses to the further impoverishment of the Chinese people. The higher freight charges on the American boats, the higher cost of flouring the wheat—these will add to the cost.

And even so, after the Chinese people are forced to pay for their own poison, will the wheat ever reach them? Chiang Kai-shek and his Finance Minister, T. V. Soong, have no intention of turning it over to the Chinese people. The wheat and the cotton will be used to feed and clothe their own troops, so that these very troops may continue their attacks on all opposed to Chiang Kai-shek; and the opposition now includes, since the Japanese invasion of Shanghai, and particularly since the Japanese invasion of North China and Chiang Kai-shek's capitulation and betrayal, the larger section of the Chinese people, the Volunteers (partisan troops, ill-armed, ill-outfitted which continue the struggle against Japan), and the Chinese Soviet areas. Not only will this army collect the taxes to repay the $50,000,000 loan, but it will be used to maintain Chiang Kai-shek's control.

We look upon the whole transaction as robbery—robbery of its own people by the puppet Nanking Government. We protest against America's activities in China. We demand recognition of the right of the Chinese people to solve their own destiny without imperialist intervention. This, of course, means that we demand that all imperialist Powers, including the United States, withdraw their troops from China.

If any loan is to be made to China which will actually be helpful to the Chinese people, then we demand that it be agreed to and administered by people without any predatory interest in the exploitation and oppression of the Chinese people. Certainly it cannot be made through the Nanking Government, which the whole world recognizes as a mere puppet in the hands of American imperialism.

J. LOEB, Executive Secretary,
The Friends of the Chinese People

New York City, July 1

Teaching on Promises

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

For thirteen years I have taught school, and this war-created depression has reduced my salary until next year (with a master's degree) I shall get less money than I have received during any year except two of my thirteen. I have built my own house on two acres of land which I own here. I like the West and I like sparsely settled sections, but this very liking has been my undoing. Apache County, Arizona, has not been financially able to pay a warrant for over a year. You understand that teachers receive their pay in school warrants, while highway employees, section men, doctors, lawyers, and nearly all others are paid in something which can be converted into silver or gold (until the United States became the official gold hoarder and guardian of all yellow metal). These warrants are registered for 6 per cent until called. They will be called sometime and the 6 per cent will be paid, but in the meantime I cannot feed my family on mere promises.

I have borrowed money on my life-insurance policies and am paying for two years of *The Nation* with that money. It is with borrowed money that I am also buying the few groceries and other articles that we need.

Do you know of some person who might buy my school warrants now and next year? If you can put me in touch with such people, I shall be very grateful to you.

I like to read your paper and I believe that I get more good from it than from any other paper with which I have ever come in contact. I like to read what I believe is the truth—and my daily paper does not always tell me the truth.

Saunders, Ariz., July 6 ELLSWORTH M. SCHNEBLY

Adventures in Ecuador

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

I have read two articles recently in *The Nation* about opportunities for students to make trips through Europe under the auspices of non-profit, educational organizations. To date I have heard very little of opportunities of this kind for the student interested in traveling through South America. To give a ray of hope to those who already have experienced Europe and are ready for the lands that lie beneath the Southern Cross, or to those who prefer to know the South American continent first, may I tell through your columns of my own experiences?

With a third-class steamer passage to Guayaquil, Ecuador, and $25 in my pockets, I left New York City on May 12, 1932. I have lived more than a year in Ecuador, enjoying myself thoroughly, seeing nearly all of the colorful Ecuadorian Andes.

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In addition, I made probably the first North American student expedition through the upper Amazon valley, pushing far into the jungle and coming in contact with many tribes of Indians. This jungle trip, made with only an Indian as guide and cargo-bearer, lasted almost two months and cost me $6, including everything.

I came to Ecuador with absolutely no experience in foreign travel and with merely a superficial college "required-course" knowledge of Spanish grammar. I am twenty-six years old and have unusually good health. I was graduated from the University of Nevada in 1929, and have lived two years in New York City.

After spending considerable time traveling and visiting, I settled in Quito, doing odd bits of work, and finally got placed as English tutor in a wealthy Ecuadorian family. This detail is just to indicate to the young, healthy, and footloose would-be traveler that it takes no extraordinary amount of ability or money to do those things he may have dreamed about but thought beyond his reach.

Should any *Nation* readers be interested in making the trip through Ecuador I would be delighted to help in every possible way—estimating costs and telling about routes, train schedules, modes of travel, communication, living conditions, and the like. Write to me, P. O. Box 660, Quito, Ecuador.

Quito, Ecuador, June 12 ELMER KELLEY LYON

The fourth and last of a series of articles on Walter Lippmann by Amos Pinchot will appear next week.

FILMS

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Starting Friday July 21st
RKO CAMEO 42nd St. & Broadway—9 A. M. to 1 P. M. 25c

Ignoble and Unhealthful

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Mr. Granville Hicks's intelligent review of my volume "This People" gives me a legitimate opening to make two observations which, at this moment in history and in Jewish history, are of crucial importance. Defending me against the idiotic charge of substituting propaganda for art, Mr. Hicks continues: "It happens that Lewisohn's assumptions are not shared by many people." Is that a fact? Is not the active negation of the fathers that begot and the mothers that bore one, and by consequence of the historic community from which one sprang, considered among all mankind an ignoble and unhealthful thing, which is not likely to lead either to sound action or to sound productivity? And have not the psychologists equated this self-negation with a lack of self-esteem as a fairly constant element in the neuroses? There were Americans at one period of our history who, ashamed of Iowa or Kansas, became, as they thought, French. One knows the kind of Frenchmen they became.

To symbolize this *universal* human problem by Jewish characters and situations is most legitimate, since the Diaspora has offered Jews the longest and grimmest temptation toward this error and this sin. Yet so powerful has been the fundamental stuff of which the Jewish soul is made that we are a more numerous people today than we have ever been. The content of the plea which not I alone but many who are wiser than I address to the Jewish people can again be stated in universally human terms as follows: human freedom consists in the affirmation of the inevitable, or, if one likes, in achieving by that process which the church calls grace and the synagogue *teshuvah* an identification of one's will with the will of God.

Paris, April 19 LUDWIG LEWISOHN

Misery in the Coal Fields

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

Leaky roofs and broken windows. Rooms almost bare of furniture. Beds without mattresses and only rags for covering. Families of father, mother, and from five to nine children. Hardly a crumb to eat in the house. These are not uncommon sights in many of the coal camps in the soft-coal areas. Much sickness due to unsanitary conditions and lack of proper food is found in these mining regions. The available government funds for feeding starving children must be supplemented.

The American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) not only is administering relief and establishing health units in various sections of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky as rapidly as funds permit, but with characteristic farsightedness has also launched significant reconstruction projects. Community gardening, canning, furniture-making, weaving, shoemaking, and farm placement play important roles in the reconstruction program. The introduction of these self-help industries into these deserted communities brings a touching response of life and hope among long-destitute people. But these projects cannot continue unless more support can be obtained.

Desperately needy communities throughout the soft-coal areas are crying aloud for such constructive aid. You can help by sending contributions to Olive Van Horn, treasurer, Coal Areas Relief, 105 East Twenty-second Street, New York; and clothing to the American Friends Service Committee, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia.

New York, July 15 JAMES MYERS,
Industrial Secretary, Federal Council of Churches

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Books and Films

Iberian Coast

By GEORGE DILLON

The boats stray in. The sunset has released
Across the world its last torn banner of light:
Blood-red, and spectral green, and from the east
Noiselessly surging, the blue starry night.

In sunsets such as this, upon this shore,
The dark boys who in ancient times became
Great mariners—watching the huge tricolor
Dragged slowly westward, watching the red flame

Glare on the wings of seabirds themselves lost
In darkness, and the long line of reddened foam
Where the black water broke on the black coast—
Grew restless. Leaving upon this shore, at home,

Nothing but the wild beauty that drove them forth,
Long since they have hauled their anchors and sailed away,
To perish without sons in the four corners of earth.
The dark boys lying in the doorways today

Are not of that breed. The archaic brightness dulls
As if forever, as if no more to dawn:
It catches in their eyes and on the gulls,
And from the world is gone.

Whittier

Quaker Militant: John Greenleaf Whittier. By Albert Mordell. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

THE effort to write a "popular" biography of John Greenleaf Whittier must be a particularly difficult and disconcerting business. This was the task that Albert Mordell set himself, and obligingly he has unearthed a few unpublished poems and discovered a hidden love affair, a "dark lady" by the name of Mary Emerson Smith. Heartened by this find, Mr. Mordell evidently decided to go a number of steps farther, and having at hand an attractive portrait of Whittier as a young man—fiery eyes, crisp black hair, and square, straight shoulders—he made the most of his advantages. He concluded that Whittier, after being severely jilted by the mysterious Miss Smith, became a male flirt, coy, elusive, cold. Then he read the anti-slavery poems and felt that these revealed the real Whittier, a young, fighting Quaker in whose veins ran quick, hot blood—blood, by the way, that was considerably cooled by the misfortune of having boiled in vain for love of a young lady.

This, then, in brief, is Mr. Mordell's thesis, and since he admires the rolling thunder of Whittier's early Abolitionist poetry, he finds himself forced to regard his hero grown into middle and old age as a bedridden, mincing turncoat, the blood-red radical transformed into an anemic, lily-fingered Tory. I happen to think that Mr. Mordell's eyes were blinded by love letters, and that in reading them he has misread a large body of Whittier's poetry. Let us reexamine Mr. Mordell's patiently assembled facts and the internal evidence contained in Whittier's verse.

Whittier was of New England Quaker stock, and his earliest traceable ancestors came from England to Haverhill, Massachusetts, during the first half of the seventeenth century. It was there that the Whittier family remained in hard-earned Yankee soil until the poet grew to manhood. There was nothing in the poet's background that would breed radical or revolutionary activity beyond a fierce declaration of personal rights, including those of property and religious conviction. I am inclined to believe that from the very start of his career Whittier was a profoundly religious man, and that his religious fervor was readily translatable into a peculiarly New England love of liberty, the liberty that granted all property-owners the right to defend a point of view within the whitewashed walls of the meeting-house. This was an introverted love and quite consistent with the few conclusively known facts of Whittier's emotional life. His distrust of a Virginian aristocracy and his hatred of slave traffic were those of an intense nationalist who feared instinctively any code of living other than the economy practiced by a New England farmer. The very existence of the Southern States threatened his own privileges as a Protestant and his security as a Yankee. It seems preposterous to accuse him of turning his coat in the face of the Chicago anarchists; his war for human liberty was a holy war that had behind it no conscious economic motive. Mr. Mordell admits Whittier's vast ignorance of industrial economics, and his refusal to look beyond the limitations of a dying agricultural democracy. Whittier's use of Biblical reference in his anti-slavery poetry was apt and just, and for him emotionally true, for he saw America as the Plains of Abraham mystically recreated into a Massachusetts countryside.

With one exception I fail to share Mr. Mordell's admiration for Whittier's anti-slavery poems. Remembering Whittier's origin as a poet I believe it is best to select certain facts from the many that Mr. Mordell has rediscovered. Literary influences came to him from Burns, then Byron, then Milton; and we are sure that he valued his local celebrity as a newspaper poet no less than an ability to write with the speed and ease of an editor preparing daily copy. Of course he wrote far too much, and in the process of hasty writing failed to fuse Burns's simplicity and Milton's sonorous gravity with his own religious heat. The mixture was seldom effective, for his emotions, though obviously sincere, were generalized into histrionic gestures, and this unhappy union of Burns and Milton fell miles short of a poetic objective. When he wrote the bulk of his Abolitionist poetry, Whittier had little time or patience to solve his aesthetic problems; the poems were turned out at white heat, and though later he attempted to revise them into more acceptable examples of his solid craftsmanship he had lost the creative impulse (too often uncritical) that gave them an excuse for being. It was not until the Civil War was over and the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery was signed that Whittier's conversion to the cause of Abolition bore ripe fruit; and note that here, in his "Laus Deo," the religious emotion behind his convictions is at last freed of the histrionic cloak that shrouds his earlier work:

For the Lord
On the whirlwind is abroad;
In the earthquake He has spoken;
He has smitten with his thunder
The Iron walls asunder,
And the gates of brass are broken.

From his forty-ninth year to the writing of "Snow-Bound" twelve years later, we have, I think, the best of Whittier's poetry; and again I fail to agree with Mr. Mordell that such writing was innocuous or an unworthy right-about-face from his original attitude. I would flatly deny that such poems as

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"Snow-Bound" and "Laus Deo" or the inadequately titled "My Playmate" were other than the logical development of Whittier's emotional maturity and craftsmanship. He wished, like Burns, to be the poet of his people, and if one cannot find by implication the New England Abolitionist in "Snow-Bound," one might as well give up reading poetry for the rest of one's life. It had taken Whittier fifty years of experience to master his idiom, to fight shy of the borrowed generalizations and oratorical mouthings that marred his so-called propaganda poetry. To say that such poetry is bad is not to say that propaganda and poetry will not mix; it merely discloses the fact that Whittier's early work resounded dismally with the fog-horn eloquence of Webster and Clay. As for the male flirt that Mr. Mordell reveals so knowingly, I suspect that he was nothing more or less than a shrewd, handsome old Yankee gentleman who made safe investments and who adored flattery—provided that his bank account remained untouched by the fair, light hands of ladies who praised his verse.

HORACE GREGORY

Twelve Hundred Pages Long

Anthony Adverse. By Hervey Allen. Farrar and Rinehart. $3.

WHEN an author writes a book twelve hundred pages long, when he spans the life of a man from his conception to his death, when he lays his scenes in France, Italy, Spain, England, the West Indies, Africa, a new America, and Mexico, when he includes not only the events in his hero's life but makes that life touch the more exalted historical events of the time, including certain of the operations of none other than Napoleon Bonaparte—when an author does these things he issues a challenge to his readers. He says in effect: "This is no ordinary novel; it is written to stand beside the great ones; it is written to last." And the reader is entitled to measure it by the most rigid standards, to place it beside the novels that many years and many readers have called great, to observe in comparison with them its stature.

I am sure that Mr. Allen would not object to this stern method of judgment, and his publishers, if one reads their observations on the jacket, positively yearn for it. They say: "The publishers believe this novel to be one of the greatest and most exciting works of literature ever produced in America." And one cannot fail to applaud this candor even while one disagrees heartily with the sentiment.

For "Anthony Adverse" is not a great novel, and it is not great for the reason that Mr. Allen is not a great writer. He has drawn a hero with all the winning qualities that a hero must possess. Anthony is handsome, tall, brave, strong, a success in love, war, and finance; his only weakness is concern over his soul, and that is a matter between himself and the reader—his contemporaries rarely are aware of it. He covers half the globe in search of excitement and peace, he engages in as daring and varied a series of exploits as the heart of a reader could demand. He meets every sort of saint, rascal, true friend, and fair lady, and incidentally charms them all, and these persons have a full-blooded and credible quality of their own. It is a large canvas, vividly painted. Half a dozen episodes have the genuine flavor of true romance and heart-filling adventure. But when the twelve hundred pages are done—and I am willing to lay a small bet that I am one of the few who will have read them all—these exploits, these colorful persons, this irresistible young man do not weld themselves into the compelling unity that a great novel demands. At the end the story falls to pieces with a great, empty clatter of falling trees, shattered images, and desperate desires for *something*. Europe is dead, the eighteenth century is dead, Anthony is dead. And what of it?

The novel has already been called chaotic, a melange of styles, a combination of Herman Melville and Dumas, with too many touches of Ethel M. Dell. But I believe what it mainly lacks is form. Its variety of styles might be all in its favor, its shift from the adventure novel to the intellectual novel and back again might be effective dramatic relief, if it moved compellingly forward to a conclusion, doom or otherwise, that not only held the reader's attention but provided clear and undeniable exaltation. The book has all the meaninglessness of life, which is unendurable in art. It abounds, moreover, in long stretches of highly dubious "philosophy," for example, the following: "In times of great change it is a question whether the restlessness of the human heart is due more to individual dissatisfaction with experience than to the drag and flux of the age." Its literary style is often heavy, pseudo-poetical, involved. Again, for example: "Yet the intense and quiet joy of the man and woman who were meant for each other,"—the third young lady meant for Anthony, by the way—"who reveled along together in an island of mutual consciousness amid the other feasters, was all the more poignant for their awareness of what was passing in the river of time." More than once Mr. Allen resorts to a note of rugged metaphor: "His sarcasm was a kind of spiritual pus that he wiped away privately with page after page of the notebook." And his love scenes are by Jurgen out of Elinor Glyn.

No, "Anthony Adverse" is not a great novel. It is not even a great adventure novel. But its successful romantic episodes would make it, with the elimination of about a third that is too dull, a highly successful and readable one. Only its extreme length and breadth, and the extravagant claims made for it make one's judgment severe. And by the yardstick of greatness it does not measure up.

DOROTHY VAN DOREN

Sections—or Classes?

The Significance of Sections in American History. By Frederick Jackson Turner. Henry Holt and Company. $3.50.

FREDERICK JACKSON TURNER was thirty-two years old in 1893 when he read his monograph, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," before the American Historical Association. From that day, forty years ago, until now it may truly be said that he has so completely dominated American historical writing that hardly a single production in all that time has failed to show the marks of his influence. Not only were Turner's own seminar students legion (he taught altogether for some thirty-four years) but his personal followers in turn scattered over the land to indoctrinate other vast numbers of eager scholars, thereby increasing the Turner host by geometric proportions. All these disciples, whether of the first, second, or third degree, were historians as well as teachers; the result has been the accumulation of a vast pile of monographic studies and special investigations, all of them concerned with aspects of the settlement and institutional development of the American West. So intensively have all these persons labored, so closely have they covered the field of American history with the fine web of their researches, that one scarcely exaggerates in saying that the patient and obscure toiling of another long generation of American historical scholars will be required to destroy this influence: for Turner and his followers were the fabricators of a tradition which is not only fictitious but also to a very large extent positively harmful.

Turner's own contributions to American historical literature were modest. He wrote one volume for the American Nation Series called "The Rise of the New West" (a history of the United States from 1820 to 1830), which was published in 1906; he was engaged when he died in 1932 on another work

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that was to continue the story to 1850; and he was responsible for not more than some thirty learned essays and general articles. The more representative of these have been collected in two volumes: the first, entitled "The Frontier in American History," was published in 1920; the second is the subject of this review.

The Turner thesis, which is not proved so much as it is continually reiterated in the papers of the two volumes of collected essays, may be summed up as follows: American development was unique in historical annals in that it was constantly being conditioned by the series of frontier zones which succeeded each other until the year 1890; and what made the frontier an ever-present force in American history was the existence of vast reaches of free arable lands. Into these successions of Western areas poured waves of pioneering spirits to influence, subtly but pervasively, all forms of American living. Particularly, these were the outstanding effects of the frontier: out of the common experiences of the Western zones emerged a distinctly American people; under the cruel conditions of frontier pioneering, where only the hardy individual could survive, was born the doctrine of democracy; because the frontier areas were in effect creations of the American government and because the frontiersmen looked to Washington for comfort and relief, loyalty was to the nation and not to the individual States—hence the American nationalistic spirit; and finally, because the Westerners regarded their governments not as sovereign controllers but as agencies for the performance of delegated public functions, the frontier States were turned into so many social laboratories where experiments in the extension of public activities were continually going on. Such were the peculiar contributions made by the presence of the frontier to America's development and progress; these were to be the subjects for scholarly inquiry.

So much for American civilization during its dynamic phases when its history was the conquest of a series of wilderness environments. But what of subsequent periods? The United States would then become "a settled nation" and reach "a more stable equilibrium" in which the chief influence at work, again differentiating American civilization from all others, would be the existence of sections. In these sections, formed by "physiographic conditions, economic interests, and constituent stocks of settled societies," where denser populations would be pressing upon the means of subsistence, would spring up groups of peoples as unlike each other as the different nations of Europe. In 1925 Turner therefore wrote: "The significant fact is that sectional self-consciousness and sensitiveness is likely to be increased as time goes on and crystallized sections feel the full influence of their geographic peculiarities, their special interests, and their developed ideals, in a closed and static nation." And in the same paper he could coolly declare: "Economic interests are sectionalized."

The analogy between the United States as a "congeries of sections" and Europe as a collection of nations particularly fascinated Turner, for he returned to it again and again. The American "physical map may be regarded as a map of potential nations and empires," he said in 1904; and the American section "is the faint image of a European nation," he repeated as late as 1925. Indeed, Europe had much to learn from American experiences: if a United States of America could be erected, why not a United States of Europe, where, too, "by substituting discussion and concession and compromised legislation for force," there could also be achieved "international political parties, international legislative bodies, and international peace"? The histories, interests, ideals, cultural achievements of American sections, then, were to be the second great field for research.

In 1922, now assuming the role of prophet in place of the customary one of preceptor, Turner, by drawing upon both his frontier and sectional hypotheses, indicated what the future of the United States was to be:

> However profound the economic changes, we shall not give up our American ideals and our hopes for men, which had their origin in our own pioneering experience, in favor of any mechanical solution offered by doctrinaires educated in Old World grievances. Rather, we shall find strength to build from our past a nobler structure, in which each section will find its place as a fit room in a worthy house.

A detailed examination of the amazing errors into which Turner fell in order to prove his two assumptions of the uniqueness of the frontier experience and the continuity of sectional differences is hardly necessary even if space permitted. Merely to mention these rather naive ideas as I have is enough to confute them. Nor am I particularly concerned with the many evidences of historical ignorance that Turner's papers in both volumes of collected miscellany on every hand display: his statement for example in an article in 1924 that American exports of foodstuffs to Europe were "directly influential upon Bismarck's policy of tariffs, state socialism, colonial empire, and sea power"; or his remark first made in 1904 and again repeated in 1925 that the Civil War's form and "its causes were fundamentally shaped by the dynamic factor of expanding sections, of a West to be won"; or his characterization in 1924 of American radical labor as being made up of "chiefly recent aliens, who interpret America in terms of Russia and adopt the policy of syndicalism."

What is of greater concern is the perverted reading Turner gave to American history in his insistence upon the uniqueness of American experience and his emphasis upon sectional development as a sort of flywheel to balance all political, social, and economic disparities. The unhappy results, for forty years, were the following: a turning inward of American historical activity at exactly the time when all trained eyes should have been on events going on beyond the country's physical borders; an accumulation of supposed evidences of the development of American institutions entirely in nativistic terms without an understanding of how closely American institutional growth paralleled the European; an almost complete disregard of the basic class antagonisms in American history; and a profound ignorance of the steps by which monopolistic capitalism and imperialism were being developed in the country. Granted that with the aid of the Turner hypotheses many interesting historical works were written: examinations of the shaping of the country's land policy, the Middle West's settlement by New England, the building of the railroads, the rise and fall of the cow country, the creation of Western farmers' organizations, and the like: can one doubt in the light of Turner's own definition of the function of historical research—"it is important to study the present and recent past, not only for themselves but also as the source of new hypotheses, new lines of inquiry, new criteria of the perspective of the remoter past"—that this extraordinary collection of learning is quite worthless?

Had Turner not so boldly cut himself loose from the currents of European thought which his teachers at Johns Hopkins were trying to emphasize through their talk of "the continuity of history" and the "inheritance of institutions," had he given more attention to the activities of some of his contemporaries instead of to the Wisconsin fur trade (the subject of his doctoral thesis)—for example, to H. D. Lloyd's "Wealth Against Commonwealth" which was published in 1890 and which gave a complete exposition of the steps by which monopolistic capitalism was being attained, or to A. T. Mahon's "The United States Looking Outward," also published in 1890, which on the basis of sound premises predicted an imperialistic career for the United States—then our own past, in the light of America's current needs, might not be the sealed book it is today.

Turner undoubtedly was right in pointing out the significance that free lands played in American development. The free lands of the West were not important, however, because they

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made possible the creation of a unique "American spirit"—that indefinable something that was to set the United States apart from European experiences for all time—but because their quick settlement and utilization for the extensive cultivation of foodstuffs furnished exactly those commodities with which the United States, as a debtor nation, could balance its international payments and borrow European capital in order to develop a native industrial enterprise. Thus, in the first place, agriculture, primarily the agriculture of those Western areas of which Turner made so much, was really a catspaw for industry; once having served its purpose, that is to say the capitalist development of the nation, it could be neglected politically and ultimately abandoned economically. In the second place, the presence of the frontier helps to explain the failure of American labor to preserve a continuous revolutionary tradition: class lines could not become fixed as long as the free lands existed to drain off the most spirited elements in the working and lower middle-class populations—not only as farmers, of course, but as small merchants and enterprisers, too—and to prevent the creation of a labor reserve for the purpose of thwarting the demands of organized workers.

The historical growth of the United States, in short, was not unique; merely in certain particulars and for a brief time, it was different from the European pattern largely because of the processes of settlement. With settlement achieved—that is to say, the historic function of extensive agriculture performed, class (not sectional!) lines solidified, competitive capitalism converted into monopolistic capitalism under the guidance of the money power, and imperialism the ultimate destiny of the nation—the United States once again was returning to the main stream of European institutional development. Only by a study of the origins and growth of American capitalism and imperialism can we obtain insight into the nature and complexity of the problems confronting us today. And I am prepared to submit that perhaps the chief reason for the absence of this proper understanding was the futile hunt for a unique "American spirit" which Frederick Jackson Turner began forty years ago and in which he involved most of America's historical scholars from that time until now.

LOUIS M. HACKER

Bundles of Fragments

The Best Short Stories, 1933. Edited by Edward J. O'Brien. Houghton Mifflin and Company. $2.50.

Twentieth Century Short Stories. Selected by Sylvia Chatfield Bates. Houghton Mifflin and Company. $2.25.

IN the prefatory remarks which always precede the stories in his annual anthology, Mr. O'Brien is this year even more hopeful than usual about the prospects for the American short story. He finds as much difference between the better short stories published in 1913 and those published in 1932 as between the poetry of Pope and the poetry of Keats. After the long period during which the short story in this country suffered from a complication of ailments arising out of our too great devotion to the past, our writers, following the examples of Sherwood Anderson and Ernest Hemingway, are hard at work trying to establish a "usable present." This "usable present," as defined by Mr. O'Brien, means something much more than a body of contemporary materials or experience. "It is the sum of all the ordered living we achieve ourselves from day to day." It includes the idea of understanding, adaptation to society, and knowledge of what it is possible for us to become. It is presumably everything that Mr. O'Brien understands by good art and since he refers to the current short story in such lyrical terms we take it that he considers the better recent short stories typical of art of this kind. The magazine *Story,* for example, is described as "the most important milestone in American letters since 'The Education of Henry Adams'." After such an astonishing statement as this, one naturally turns with avidity to the pages that follow.

What one finds is a group of stories, taken from such different sources as the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *Prairie Schooner,* of an average level of quality that is neither very far above nor below that of any of Mr. O'Brien's anthologies of the past five or six years. It is especially disappointing to discover that the selections from *Story,* with the exception of Naomi Shumway's Ike and Us Moons, are among the least distinguished in the volume. Only three of the stories, those by Miss Shumway, Erskine Caldwell, and Katherine Anne Porter, are likely to impress the reader as being able to survive the twofold "test of substance and of form" which Mr. O'Brien lays down for his triple-asterisk group. In Miss Shumway's account of a pioneer family's effort to preserve itself after migration from the Blue Grass to the Yellowstone, the attempt to work into the American "tradition" for once successfully avoids the tendency to ignore adequate characterization and style. Indeed, the quality of the language in this story, which is poetic without straining our credulity, is chiefly responsible for its success. Mr. Caldwell's The First Autumn is so unlike his novels, both in substance and manner, that one does not easily identify it as being by his hand. It is the most objectively constructed story in the book and will therefore be liked and disliked for the same reason. The moment that its point is grasped the reader is divided between a feeling of irritation at the author's reluctance to state his meaning explicitly and a feeling of admiration at the skill with which he lets the action relate his meaning. It is Katherine Anne Porter's The Cracked Looking-Glass, however, which most nearly realizes Mr. O'Brien's contention that the past year was an exceptional one. Building on an epigram in the first episode of Joyce's "Ulysses," Miss Porter has written a study in the vicissitudes of an Irish Madame Bovary stranded in the Connecticut hills that is at once a fully developed portrait of an individual, a type, and a race. So expert is Miss Porter in her knowledge of the Celtic sensibility, so subtly attuned to the rhythms and idioms of Irish speech, that it is hard to believe she is not by right of birth an Irish writer, although she must hereafter be counted as one by right of sympathy and comprehension.

Of the twenty-nine stories in Mr. O'Brien's collection, thirteen are written either directly or indirectly from the point of view of a character whose intellectual level is obviously below that of the writer. It may be that of a small-town Rotarian (George Milburn's Apostate), a trolley-line employee (George Albee's Fame Takes the J Car), or a Tacoma mine-worker (Grant Leenhouts's The Facts in the Case). In no fewer than seven stories the point of view is that of a child. It is possible that this may be put down to coincidence or simply that more of our fiction writers are learning the advantages of a specially selected point of view. The playing on a child's half-conscious grasp of facts and events, as a recent review has suggested, may only be a vogue. But one is compelled to seek some better explanation for this wholesale abandonment of the traditional auctorial point of view in recent fiction. The growing tendency among certain writers to set down, in letter or personal narrative form, the exact speech of Rotarians, mine-workers, and children instead of addressing us in a vocabulary and style more closely resembling their own, is undoubtedly a consequence of the so-called "documentary" impulse in current literature. But the documentary impulse itself is open to a closer examination. It will usually be found that those writers who lavish on us a great many facts (sometimes referred to as "life") do so because they do not know what else to do with them. The curious contradiction is that while these facts do not have any meaning for the authors themselves they are expected to seem very

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important to their readers. And it is somehow made to follow that if the facts are presented from the point of view of someone not the author they are even more important. Besides, the author has the advantage of playing safe; he is relieved from the responsibility and increasing difficulty of making something out of them. Because such themes as love, death, and sorrow have become too complex for the mature intelligence, they can be saved only by being relegated to the stupid, sub-normal, or infantile mind. The short story is thus able to move on to new heights, if one believes Mr. O'Brien, by devoting itself to a kind of stenography of bewilderment.

This bewilderment and the profounder reasons behind it are more frankly revealed in such a story as Thomas Mann's Disorder and Early Sorrow, which Miss Bates has the good taste to include in her collection of thirty-one stories from six different countries. So perfectly does Mann communicate the *sentiment* of transition in this story that we are left with little wonder as to why the modern short story is the uncertain, evasive, fragmentary thing it is. Miss Bates's selection from the field is marked by thoroughness, intelligence, and more good taste than has been shown in a long time. One regrets, of course, the inclusion of certain entries at the expense of certain favorites of one's own—Joyce's Araby, Mary Butts's The Golden Bough, and Meridel Le Sueur's Persephone. But these changes would not alter the impression left by the collection as a whole, that of a "bundle of fragments," to use Yeats's phrase, or contribute in the least toward any effect of unity in its reflection of the contemporary world.

WILLIAM TROY

A Revolutionist's Field-Book

Memoirs of a Bolshevik. By O. Piatnitsky. International Publishers. $2.

ON the occasion of the periodic purgings of the Russian Communist Party, every member is required to submit a political biography giving a full account of his activities before and after he joined the party. These memoirs are an outgrowth of the political biography submitted by the author at the party purging of 1921, and since he was one of the charter members of the original Bolshevik wing, his career is synchronous with the history of the party. For some unrevealed reason the memoirs stop short with the February, 1917, revolution, which found him an exile in Siberia. The English translation is from a revised edition, which accounts perhaps for anti-Trotzkyite asides, hardly conceivable in 1921 and rather forced coming from such a practical field worker as Piatnitsky, with neither the inclination nor the capacity for doctrinal disputation.

Piatnitsky is of the type who are the backbone of movements, the anonymous rocks of the church. Steadfast, self-effacing, incorruptible, he plied his revolutionary trade as industriously as a mechanic, and his love of an efficiently running political machine crops out in his unorthodox admiration for the German Social Democratic Party when he was in Germany in 1912. He records that Lenin used to twit him about "his friends the Social Democrats." "Many Russian comrades passing through Leipzig denounced the Social Democrats, but I thought at the time that they did so because they had never seen the S. D.'s at work." But Piatnitsky was not merely metaphorically a mechanic. While he was in Paris (after his escape from the Kiev prison) he studied and mastered engineering, because he was eager to return to Russia "in a way that would get me immediately in the midst of workers in the factories."

Since the Russian revolutionary parties were illegal the book is replete with interesting details of their methods of underground organization and agitation. For instance, "as those who were arrested used to be beaten at the police stations there was danger that they might involuntarily disclose their comrades." A special pamphlet was therefore published by the party entitled "How to Conduct Oneself Under Arrest." He adds that "those who deliberately gave away their comrades were dealt with unmercifully and summarily." In this regard it is worth while noting the wholesome respect which the police had for the *Iskra* organization, the group which disseminated in Russia the magazine which Lenin edited abroad. During one of Piatnitsky's numerous arrests an official suggested that a club be used to make him talk. To which the official examining him replied: "You are mistaken. He will not say a thing. He is a member of the *Iskra* organization."

Iskra was smuggled into Russia in various ingenious ways. The most common vehicle was a false-bottomed valise. There was also the "breastplate." "For men we manufactured a kind of waistcoat into which we could stuff two or three hundred copies of *Iskra,* for women we constructed special bodices and sewed literature into their skirts. This was called 'express transport' in our parlance."

Piatnitsky served several terms in prison, and for him as for many of the revolutionists his imprisonment was an opportunity to round out his Marxist education. The prisons seem to have been the Marx-Engels Institutes of Czarist Russia. The indulgence of the authorities on this score is a mystery. Piatnitsky records: "In 1905 many Marxist books were published and I devoured them eagerly. When I was at liberty I had hardly any time to read, for I was always engulfed in practical work."

In the preface to these memoirs by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute of Moscow the hope is expressed that the book will serve "as a textbook which would help our comrades abroad . . . to learn the methods of underground work." But the lessons of the book are largely restricted to those countries which are on a par, economically and politically, with Czarist Russia, where the government had no mass support but, like an alien garrison quartered upon the country, was distrusted by all classes of the population. Outside of China and India there are few such countries on the contemporary horizon. Underground work in such countries is simplified by the friendly neutrality of the bulk of the population. But in countries where the government has some measure of mass support, as in Fascist Germany and Italy, or in semi-Fascist Japan, Turkey, and Poland, or in highly developed capitalist countries with a mass bourgeoisie like the United States, Russian precedents are of limited value.

ALTER BRODY

Films

Documentary Films

THE most recent Soviet importation, "Twenty-six Commissars" (Acme), is a good example of the new type of documentary film to which the Russian cinema has turned since the reconstruction of the revolutionary period in the great works of Eisenstein and Pudovkin. Superior in every respect to Dovzhenko's "Ivan" viewed earlier in the season, it manages to give a pretty complete picture of a particular industry without subordinating everything else to the purpose. As in "Potemkin" the thesis resides in the situation rather than in the mouths of the characters. Shengelaya manages such a smooth synthesis of the elements separately developed by his predecessors that the result has the balanced perfection of a work created out of some settled tradition. It is probably this quality to which Dovzhenko refers when he says the film is "as austere as a Beethoven symphony." From Eisenstein undoubtedly derives the symbolical use of posture and grouping, so that in certain scenes the

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grime-covered workers in the Baku oil fields are made to take on the sinister immobility of black statuary. Shengelaya's own talent is to be discovered in an avoidance of monotony by a larger representation of types—which is, of course, considerably aided here by the mixed racial background of the setting—than has been common in recent Soviet productions. This is also largely responsible for reducing the sharpness of the formula. Based on the troubles surrounding the Menshevists' invitation to the British to occupy Baku in 1918, the picture will have a certain timely interest in view of the current relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Republic. But the interest of its direction, photography, and acting is sufficient to make it worth the attention of anyone interested in the current cinema.

"Samarang" might also be described as a documentary film, but in the tradition of "Nanook of the North," "Tabu," and other attempts to recreate the *mores* and living conditions of remote places on the earth's surface. The place here is an island in the Malay Straits; the men are pearl-divers, and the women weave floral garlands for their marriage feasts; but the result is unfortunately neither so quaint nor so instructive as is intended. Indeed, the dull photography, the crude scenario, and the embarrassing acting of the chief pearl-diver, who exhibits all the symptoms of a stock-company principal suffering from acute exhibitionism, are enough to discourage us with this type of picture for some time to come. No longer do a few sharks and a few old natives in front of a hut seem adequate material for a film of this length. Perhaps the real significance of "Samarang" is that it shows a marked weariness in the cinema's circumnavigation of the globe.

It is also discouraging to report that in the most recent Walt Disney cartoon, "Gala Premiere," Mickey Mouse betrays a most dangerous self-consciousness. People have been talking so loudly about how good he is, what a great artist he is, and the rest, that he has at last heard about it and responded with what is perhaps the only poor appearance he has yet made. Before he even shows his whiskers in his new picture we are required to sit through a succession of mediocre caricatures of Maurice Chevalier, Clark Gable, the Barrymores, and others of his admirers who assist at his grand opening. As a result his picture, when it is finally shown, seems like a letdown and much below his usual level. If Mickey Mouse is not very careful, he will soon find that he belongs with Lindbergh, Aimée Semple MacPherson, and the ages. WILLIAM TROY

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